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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Stalin fumes as Pradhan says TN is ruining future of students

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday slammed the Tamil Nadu government for its stand on three-language policy under the NEP, accusing it of "ruining the future of the students" in the state for politics, drawing a sharp retort from Chief Minister M K Stalin, who asked him to "control his tongue".

During his reply in Parliament on the Central funds for the PM Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme, Pradhan also called the Stalin government "dishonest", evoking protests from the DMK MPs, who raised slogans and disrupted proceedings of the House, resulting in its adjournment. Heated exchanges also took

PHOTO: PTI

place outside Parliament between the BJP and opposition parties, including the Congress.

Shortly after Pradhan's comments in Parliament, Stalin took to social media to launch a scathing attack against Pradhan, who he accused of speaking with "arrogance as if he was a king" and asked him to "control his tongue".

Referring to Pradhan's letter to him that outlined Tamil Nadu's rejection of the NEP, 3-language policy and PM SHRI MoU, he said the DMK government functioned by respecting the views of the people, unlike the BJP leaders who were bound by "words from Nagpur."

Taking strong exception to the minister's remarks, the DMK members raised slogans against the central government in the House. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla asked the agitating members to return to their seats and allow the House to function normally. Meanwhile, DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi moved a breach of privilege notice against Pradhan, seeking action against him for "contempt of the House" while he was replying to a question regarding the non-disbursal of funds by the union government under the Samagra Shiksha scheme. *—PTI*

Karnataka passes Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill

BJP says Bill is an insult to former PM Rajiv Gandhi

BENGALURU, 10 MARCH

Karnataka Assembly on Monday passed the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill amid protests by the Opposition BJP.

The Bill pertains to restructuring the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) by splitting it into a maximum of seven city corporations in the Greater Bengaluru Area.

It also provides for a constitution of a Greater Bengaluru Authority for coordination and supervision, and 30 months terms for the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor.

The Bill was tabled in the Assembly by Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who holds the Bengaluru development portfolio.

Shivakumar said, "We want the decentralisation of power and administration. We are not destroying Bengaluru as some of the opposition members have stated. Instead, we are strengthening it. We want to make Bengaluru strong."

He added that the Bill has been brought to give Bengaluru a new direction.

Disagreeing with his statement, the Leader of the Opposition, R Ashoka, said this Bill is an insult to former

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar speaks during the Budget session of the state Legislative Assembly, in Bengaluru **PHOTO: PTI**

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who wanted to strengthen the local bodies.

He alleged that the Congress is paving the way for other local bodies to raise a similar demand for dividing them into several divisions. "Dividing Bengaluru will not help us," Ashoka said.

APMC Amendment Bill The Karnataka Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation and Development) (Amendment) Bill was passed by the Karnataka Assembly.

State Agricultural Marketing Minister Shivanand Patil said that earlier the government was regulating only the APMC yards but once the bill becomes a law, those doing business on the e-platform will have to operate within its framework. "For example, D Mart, Big Basket, Amazon and Udaan come in our e-commerce platform. They are doing business evading our legal provisions. We are bringing this law to regulate them from doing business without paying cess," Patil said.

Provisions to regulate e-rickshaws

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy said the government will either bring an amendment bill in the next Assembly or make changes in the rules to regulate e-rickshaws.

The minister said he would ensure that provisions are made to issue permits, but no money would be charged for it. This is meant only to regulate the misuse of exemption given to e-rickshaws from obtaining permit, he said.

Separate development corporation for Jains

Minister for Waqf and Minority Affairs BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan told the Legislative Assembly that the government will ensure the creation of a separate development corporation for the Jain community in the days ahead. Kannada speaking Digambara Jains are settled in Belagavi, Hubballi-Dharwad, Vijayapura and surrounding areas. They are about 15 lakh in number, he said. *—PTI*

K'taka Legislative Assembly passes Microfinance Bill

BENGALURU, 10 MARCH

- Patil said predatory loan recovery methods led to some borrowers losing self confidence and about 15 people committed suicide, and in several instances borrowers fled their homes or villages. The Bill also prohibits seeking to forcibly take any document from the borrower

Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Monday passed a Bill aimed at protecting borrowers from harassment by microfinance institutions (MFIs), with penal provisions including a jail term up to ten years, and fine as high as Rs five lakh for violation.

The Karnataka Micro Loan and Small Loan (Prevention of Coercive Actions) Bill, 2025, piloted by Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil on behalf of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, was passed unopposed with a voice vote.

The Bill seeks to replace the Karnataka Micro Loan and Small Loan (Prevention of Coercive Actions) Ordinance, that was promulgated on 12 February.

The government had decided on promulgating the ordinance in response to a spate of suicides and multiple complaints from various parts of the state against predatory loan recovery methods by microfinance firms.

According to the Bill, all microfinance institutions, money-lending agencies and lenders have to register with deputy commissioners within 30 days.

The Bill prohibits 'coercive' loan recovery methods, and action can be taken by authorities against microfinance companies or lenders if they use pressure, violence, insults, private/outsourced agencies, persons with a criminal background and so on.

It also prohibits seeking to forcibly take any document from the borrower which entitles the borrower to a benefit under any government programmes. Piloting the Bill for the consideration of the House, Patil, explaining the circumstances which led to the government brining in this legislation, said predatory loan recovery methods led to some borrowers losing self confidence and about 15 people committed suicide, and in several instances borrowers fled their homes or villages. *—PTI*

ED team attacked after raids at Baghel's home

RAIPUR, 10 MARCH

Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials, who had searched former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel's premises in a money laundering investigation against his son in the alleged liquor scam case, were attacked by a group of people. According to sources, Congress workers, who were upset over the searches at Baghel's premises attacked the officials. The car of a deputy director-level ED officer was also attacked, sources said. The raids began around 7 am and the ED search party was accompanied by a security team of the CRPF, the sources said. The agency searched 14 locations in Durg district, including the Bhilai premises of Bhupesh Baghel's son Chaitanya Baghel, his alleged close associate Laxmi Narayan Bansal alias Pappu Bansal and others under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). *—PTI*
>>>MORE ON P3

Vanuatu cancels Lalit Modi's passport

PORT VILA, 10 MARCH

IPL founder Lalit Modi's Vanuatu passport was cancelled after the country's Prime Minister Jotham Napat noted the various cases pending against him. Modi is wanted in India in one of the largest money embezzlement cases in the country. The cancellation comes after the Modi attempted to surrender his Indian citizenship, and MEA contacted Vanuatu, submitting a report of the allegations against him. If Modi's request for cancellation of the Indian passport is accepted, he may become an illegal alien in the UK as Vanuatu is also revoking his citizenship. *—PTI*
>>>MORE ON P4

30 injured in Jallikattu event near Hosur

ANEKAL, 10 MARCH

Thirty people were seriously injured during a Jallikattu event near Mallikarjuna Durgam village, close to Hosur in Tamil Nadu, near the Karnataka border. The event saw enthusiastic participation, with over 500 bulls and competitors from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and nearby regions. Jallikattu, a high-risk sport, is banned in Karnataka but is conducted in Tamil Nadu with government permission as part of Pongal celebrations. The event, held annually, attracts thousands of spectators. While Karnataka has a similar sport called Gooli Kalaga, Jallikattu holds deep cultural significance in Tamil Nadu as a traditional bull-taming event linked to Pongal. *—Salar News*

New Canada PM Mark Carney vows to rebuild ties with India

OTTAWA, 10 MARCH

Mark Carney, the next former central banker, set to take over as Prime Minister of Canada after winning the race to lead the country's federal Liberal Party has said he would rebuild the country's relationship with India if he takes charge.

Carney takes on the role as Canada is locked in a potentially catastrophic trade war with the US.

Stating that there were opportunities to rebuild the relationship with India, Carney on last Tuesday said

Mark Carney **PHOTO: X**

that, "There needs to be a shared sense of values around that commercial relationship. If I'm prime minister, I look forward to the opportunity to build that," India-Canada ties hit rock bottom last year after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in September 2023 in the House of Commons said there were 'credible allegations' of a potential link between Indian agents and the killing of pro-Khalistan separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, British Columbia. New Delhi, however, consistently denied the allegations, with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) saying Canada has 'presented us no evidence' in support of the serious allegations. *—PTI*
>>>MORE ON P6

Thousands of X users report service disruption globally

SAN FRANCISCO, 10 MARCH

Billionaire Elon Musk-owned X suffered a service disruption on Monday with thousands of users globally.

According to Downdetector, the interruptions peaked in the afternoon around 3.30pm with nearly 2,200 reports from Indian users and surged once again around 7.30pm as 1,500 reports were received on the outage tracking website.

Globally, the extent of impact was more severe (20,000 in the US, and 10,000 in the UK - as per reports).

Downdetector showed that nearly 53 per cent of problems were related to the website, 41 per cent to the app and 6 per cent had to do with server connection problems. One individual wrote on Downdetector, "Musk need to fire himself. . Meanwhile, Tesla stock fell more than 13.31 per cent as another bearish call from Wall Street sent shares to their lowest level since the day before the presidential election and 50 per cent from its record closing high of USD479 seen on 17 December. Responding to the outage, Musk said, "There was (still is) a massive cyberattack against X. We get attacked every day, but this was done with a lot of resources. Either a large, coordinated group and/or a country is involved" *—Agencies*

CM HONOURS SHABANA AZMI

CM Siddaramaiah honoured actor Shabana Azmi with the Lifetime Achievement Award at his residence, 'Kaveri,' on Monday. The CM also pledged to push for GST benefits for artists and musicians **PHOTO: SALAR**

NOTE FOUND IN LOO

AI flight returns over threat note

MUMBAI, 10 MARCH

An Air India flight from Mumbai to New York returned to the airport here on Monday after a bomb threat note was found inside its toilet mid-air, officials said.

The aircraft, carrying more than 320 persons, landed safely in Mumbai and is undergoing mandatory checks by the security agencies.

A passenger spotted the note with the message 'There is a bomb in the flight' written on it inside the toilet and alerted the crew, a Sahar police official here said.

An officer said that an FIR has been filed against unidentified person in connection with the matter.

The flight has been rescheduled to operate at 5 am on Tuesday **PHOTO: X**

15 flights got hoax bomb threat in 2025

There were 322 persons, including 19 crew members, in the Boeing 777-300 ER aircraft, a source said.

The Air India in a statement said, "A potential security threat was detected mid-flight on AI119 operating Mumbai-New York (JFK) on Monday. After following the necessary protocols, the flight air-returned to Mumbai at 10.25am, in the interest of the safety and security of all on board."

The flight has been rescheduled to operate at 5 am on Tuesday, and all passengers have been offered hotel accommodation, meals, and other assistance until then, it said. *—PTI*

KIA gets 1st sensory room for neurodivergent flyers

BENGALURU, 10 MARCH

In a step towards promoting inclusive air travel, the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) has introduced a sensory room, a first at an airport in India.

Located near the 080 International Lounge at Level 4 of Terminal 2, the sensory room is tailored for neurodivergent passengers and individuals with sensory sensitivities.

Hari Marar, the MD and CEO of BIAL, said, "We are committed to building an inclusive and passenger-friendly airport."

Airports can be overwhelming with bright lights, continuous announcements and security screenings – factors that can be challenging for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other sensory or mental health conditions, said a statement issued by the BIAL on Monday.

PHOTO: X

Research in sensory regulation and occupational therapy indicate that even brief periods (15–30 minutes) in a calming, sensory-friendly environment can significantly alleviate feelings of being overwhelmed and enhance well-being, making travel smoother and more manageable, added the release. *—PTI*

3 killed in separate road accidents in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 10 MARCH

Three individuals lost their lives in separate road accidents across the city within the last 24 hours, with excessive speed believed to be the primary factor in these tragic incidents. The first accident occurred around 1.30pm on Monday near Wheeler Road in Pulikeshinagar, where an unidentified male two-wheeler rider was struck by a truck. In the second incident, at approximately 1 am within the Upparpet traffic police station limits, Vishak, 27, an employee from Channapatna, was fatally injured after being hit by a speeding mini truck. In a third accident, Sandeep, 42, a cab driver was killed when a speeding car crashed into a scooter. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Postcards launched honouring Appu on his 50th birthday

BENGALURU, 10 MARCH

In honour of what would have been Puneeth Rajkumar's 50th birthday, affectionatley called as Appu India Post has launched a collection of five picture postcards celebrating the late Kannada film icon. Chief Postmaster General of Karnataka Circle, S Rajendra Kumar, announced the collaboration with Appu's Gandhadagudi Agarbathie during the launch. On 17 March, which marks Rajkumar's birthday, India Post will also issue a Special Cancellation, allowing collectors to obtain it from philatelic bureaus across Karnataka. They can also acquire the Special Cancellation on the five postcards. *—PTI*

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Tibetans march on 66th anniversary of Uprising Day

MYSURU, 10 MARCH

Hundreds of Members of Tibetan Youth Congress and Regional Tibetan Organisations For Women of Bylakuppe, Hunsur and Kollegal on Monday took out a march in Mysuru to commemorate the 66th anniversary of 1959th Tibetan Uprising day. They also honoured the 1.2 million Tibetans who were killed during the rebellion against Chinese aggression and protested against Chinese government's alleged cultural and ethnic genocide in Tibet. They said Chinese government not only invaded their land but also occupied it under the pretext of a peace agreement and it is continuing to destroy Tibetan culture. *—Salar News*

Bidar mantapas enable budget weddings

BIDAR, 10 MARCH

In a bid to assist the less fortunate in managing wedding costs, Kalyana Mantapas (wedding halls) are being established in 17 Gram Panchayats within the Bidar South Assembly Constituency, announced MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale. At the inauguration of a newly built Kalyana Mantapa in Aurad (S) village, Bidar Taluk, on Sunday, Dr. Beldale revealed that the hall was constructed with a Rs 35 lakh grant from the Kalyana Karnataka Region Development Board. "I had pledged before the elections that each Panchayat would have a Kalyana Mantapa. In keeping with that promise, the construction of these facilities is underway. They will provide support for weddings, naming ceremonies, meetings. *—Salar News*

Builders retain ownership despite laws

Despite an HC order on 27 Jan, the State govt is yet to take concrete action

SARAH FAZAL
BENGALURU, 10 MARCH

The delay in implementing the Karnataka Apartment Ownership Act, promised by political leaders across party lines ahead of the 2023 Karnataka elections, has left apartment owners in Bengaluru waiting to get complete ownership rights to the properties they own.

This means that while you may own a flat worth lakhs or crores of rupees in a well-equipped gated community with top-notch facilities, and you pay maintenance fees on time, you do not have ownership rights to the common areas or the land on which the building stands.

Shwetha R, a chip design engineer and resident of an apartment in Whitefield, said, "We are paying property tax for land that legally does not belong to us. If the landowner has not transferred the property rights to our association, what are we paying the taxes for? Karnataka has become a land of lawlessness with no legal framework for residential property owners."

Despite many laws, many developers retain control over common spaces, leaving owners without full legal ownership of property **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

This contradicts the following existing laws:

- Real Estate Regulatory Authority Act Sections 11 & 17 says that after 30 flats are occupied, the builder is legally obligated to transfer the undivided proportionate title of the land to the association of flat owners within three months of receiving the occupancy certificate.

- Karnataka Ownership Flats Act, 1972 (KOFA) mandates that promoters transfer property titles and execute necessary sale documents in favour of flat owners.

- Karnataka Apartment Ownership Act, 1972 (KAOA) grants each apartment owner exclusive rights to their unit, while jointly owning common areas of the building.

> In February 2024, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar announced in the State Assembly that a new Karnataka Apartment Ownership Act would be introduced to protect apartment buyers and owners

Despite these laws, many developers retain control over common spaces, leaving apartment owners without full legal ownership of their property.

Dhananjaya Padmana bhachar, Convenor of KHBF and a flat owner, said, "We have been pursuing this issue relentlessly. We even sent a draft act, modelled after the Odisha Apartment (Ownership and Management) Act, 2023, to the government and filed a writ petition in the High Court of Karnataka in January 2025. Despite all these efforts, there has been no substantial outcome."

In February 2024, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar announced in the State Assembly that a new Karnataka Apartment Ownership Act would be introduced to protect apartment buyers and owners.

Fourteen months later, on 8 March, 2025, Additional Chief Secretary Uma Shankar said that the Act "will come into force by the end of this year".

Padmanabhachar said, "Action must be time-bound. The last official communication we received was a letter from the Housing Department dated 30 November, 2024. It said the government was in the final stages of drafting a new Apartment Ownership Act. But we are still waiting for concrete action."

Even the High Court took note of the inaction, issuing an order on 27 January, 2025, directing the state government to submit a report.

Abdul Aleem, a resident of HM Tanbourine and president of the Changemakers of Kanakapura Road Association, said, "At our apartment, the builder has retained a portion of undivided share (UDS) land, even though the entire portion has already been used in the Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Now, they are constructing 120 more flats, blatantly violating building bylaws." *—Salar News*

Security enhanced at tourist sites amid Hampi gangrape

KOPPAL, 10 MARCH

Authorities are intensifying night patrols, installing special barricades for vehicle checks, and mandating the installation of CCTV cameras at homestays and resorts in response to the shocking gang-rape of two women near Hampi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, according to police officials.

The harrowing incident occurred on Thursday night when a 27-year-old Israeli tourist and a local homestay operator were allegedly assaulted while stargazing. Additionally, three male tourists accompanying the women were attacked and thrown into a canal, with one of them tragically found dead.

PHOTO: X

In the aftermath of the attack, reports indicate that many foreign visitors are departing Hampi and its surrounding areas. Ram L Arasiddi, Superintendent of Police for Koppal, announced that highway patrols have been increased and an inspector has been assigned specifically for night patrols in Anegundi and Sanapur.

"We held discussions with homestay, resort, and hotel owners on the safety protocols necessary for the protection of tourists, particularly foreign nationals," Arasiddi stated. "We have issued strict instructions for the installation of CCTV cameras and have asked owners to notify local police stations about foreign guests. It is compulsory for these tourists to complete Form C, providing visa and passport details along with passport-sized photographs." In light of previous incidents involving wildlife, homestay operators have also been advised against nighttime excursions. *—PTI*

POLITICAL TURMOIL ERUPTS OVER GOLD SMUGGLING CASE

BENGALURU, 10 MARCH

The alleged gold smuggling case involving Kannada actress Ranya Rao has sparked a fierce political row in Karnataka, with the ruling Congress and opposition BJP exchanging accusations of favouritism and cover-ups.

She was remanded to judicial custody for 14 days.

Ranya Rao, also known as Harshavardhini Ranya, was arrested last week for allegedly smuggling gold valued at Rs 12 crore from Dubai. BJP state president BY Vijayendra accused the government of a serious breach of protocol that enabled the smuggling, suggesting it could not occur without the support of government members.

Congress accused the previous BJP government of giving 12 acres for a steel factory to Rao's firm Ksiroda India in February 2023. Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board confirmed this.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has reported significant seizures connected to the case, bringing the total seizure to around Rs 17.29 crore.

Home Minister G Parameshwara said that the State has no information on the issue. DRI has said that at least 30 imported luxury wristwatches worth Rs 1 crore. Ranya reportedly failed to provide convincing answers. The officials, however, have not seized the watches yet but are examining the purchase records. Also, one more person was arrested.

Meanwhile, Rao claimed that she was verbally tortured.

DKS denies reports linking ministers to the case

Deputy Chief Minister DK rejected reports that claim two ministers have links to the gold smuggling case and termed the reports as "political gossips".

He said, "No minister is involved, we don't know anything. It is all political gossip. Investigating officers will investigate in accordance with the law. We have nothing to do with it."

Speaking to reporters here, he said, "The central government is investigating, let them do it." *—PTI*

Activists protest discrimination against Kannadigas

BENGALURU, 10 MARCH

The Karnataka Rakshana Vedike (KRV) on Monday launched an indefinite overnight protest at Freedom Park, accusing the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) of discrimination against Kannada medium candidates in the recently held recruitment examinations.

The protest, which began around 11am, witnessed participation from former actor and politician Mukhyamantri Chandru; former president of Kannada Sahitya Parishat Nalluru Prasad; Kannada scholar and littérateur Prof Hampa Nagarajaiah; retired IAS officer and writer C Somashekar; and Associate Professor of Marketing, Sameeulla Khan. They collectively condemned the alleged injustice faced by Kannada medium aspirants in the recruitment process for 384 gazetted probationary posts conducted by the KPSC.

KRV President TA Narayana Gowda, alleged that KPSC officials deliberately sidelined Kannada medium candidates by conducting examinations primarily in English and translating question papers from English to Kannada instead of vice versa. This, he claimed, led to severe discrepancies and unfair treatment of Kannada medium aspirants.

They also demanded the immediate transfer of KPSC Exam Controller Gyanendra Kumar Gangwar, accusing him of deliberately acting against the interests of Kannada candidates. They demanded formation of an inquiry commission led by a retired judge to probe alleged corruption. *—Salar News*

Kannada activists protest demanding reexamination for the Kannadigas in KPSC at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Techie loses ₹90 lakh in online gaming

BENGALURU, 10 MARCH

A technocrat in Bengaluru has approached the Bengaluru Central Cyber Economic and Narcotics (CEN) police for help after he lost Rs 90 lakh in online gaming. H said that in a desperate attempt to recover his lost money, he continued investing large sums, eventually plunging into heavy debt.

Sunil (name changed) allegedly began playing online games through a platform called Namma Exchange in June 2023 after being introduced to it by a friend.

"Initially, I invested Rs 10,000 and won Rs 40,000, which was credited to my account. Encouraged by the initial profit, I continued to play, hoping to multiply my earnings," he said. However, as his losses mounted, Sunil invested higher sums in a bid to recover his money. The techie eventually invested over Rs 90 lakh, including Rs 40 lakh borrowed from financial institutions and Rs 50 lakh from his savings. Despite suffering continuous losses, his friend convinced him that it was common to incur losses and consistent investments would yield higher profits.

Believing this, Sunil continued playing. *—Salar News*

Fire sparks chaos at KR Market; BBMP blamed

BENGALURU, 10 MARCH

Chaos broke out at the bustling Krishnarajendra (KR) Market on Monday afternoon after a heap of unattended garbage caught fire, triggering panic among vendors, shoppers, and commuters. Thick smoke engulfed parts of the market, including the vicinity of the Bala Gangadharanatha Swamy (BGS) Flyover, causing tension and traffic jams for some time.

Police along with a fire and emergency services team rushed to the spot and managed to contain the fire, preventing it from spreading further. No casualties were reported. According to vendors, the incident highlights the long-standing negligence by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in maintaining the market premises. Despite KR Market generating over Rs 10 lakh in monthly revenue for the BBMP, vendors lament that garbage collection and disposal remain grossly mismanaged, increasing the risk of fire breakouts.

PHOTO: SALAR

"The BBMP has turned a blind eye to illegal garbage dumping and encroachments here. We have complained several times, but no action has been taken," said a vegetable vendor.

KR Market continues to grapple with sanitation and waste management issues despite its prominence as one of the largest wholesale markets in the city. *—Salar News*

Case filed against Sam Pitroda on illegal use of govt land

BENGALURU, 10 MARCH

A case was filed against President of the Congress Overseas unit Sam Pitroda and others in the Special Anti-Land Grabbing Court in Bengaluru. The case involves the alleged illegal use of government land.

Pitroda, Darshan Shankar, the founder of the Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) and four senior State Forest Department officials are accused of allegedly grabbing government land.

In 1996, FRLHT obtained a 12.35acre piece of reserve forest land in Jarakabande Kaval, near Yelahanka, on a five-year lease from the State Forest Department. This lease was renewed in 2001 for 10 more years. However, the lease expired FRLHT has allegedly continued to occupy the land illegally for over 14 years. The land is valued at more than 150 crore rupees and has a market value of more than 300 crores. The body has allegedly made around Rs 6 crores by selling rare herbal plants. *—ANI*

RS 70L FRAUD CASE

Man dupes 100 with fake Kumbh Mela tour

BENGALURU, 10 MARCH

A 35-year-old man has been arrested by the Govindaraja Nagar police for allegedly defrauding more than 100 individuals out of approximately Rs 70 lakh by offering bogus Kumbh Mela tour packages.

The accused, named Raghavendra Rao, a resident of GKW Layout, operated a fraudulent travel agency under the title Panchajanya Tours and Travels.

According to police reports, Rao extensively marketed his Kumbh Mela Tour Package across social media platforms, including Facebook, promoting a week-long pilgrimage covering Ayodhya, Kashi, and Prayagraj for Rs 49,000 per person by air. Enticed by the appealing offer, numerous individuals booked the tour and paid the advance fee.

The police have urged the public to exercise caution when booking tour packages online **PHOTO: PTI**

To bolster his credibility, the fraudster had previously taken a small group to the Maha Kumbh Mela, capturing photos and videos from the pilgrimage which he later used to endorse his tour packages, thereby convincing potential customers of the legitimacy of his services.

However, after amassing advance payments from over 100 individuals, Raghavendra allegedly cancelled the majority of the trips and began avoiding calls from his clients. When victims realised they had been scammed, at least 21 approached the Govindaraja Nagar police and lodged complaints. Probe revealed that Raghavendra had swindled a total of Rs 70 lakh. Police registered a case under relevant sections of the BNS and apprehended Raghavendra, who is currently being interrogated.

The police have urged the public to exercise caution when booking tour packages online and to verify the legitimacy of travel agencies before making payments. *—Salar News*

M'rashtra seeks K'taka's help to catch wild elephants

BELAGAVI, 10 MARCH

Facing a growing crisis with rogue elephants, Maharashtra has turned to Karnataka's forest department for assistance in capturing the wild animals that have ravaged vast areas of crops over the past two months.

Nine adult elephants, causing destruction in the Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri districts of Maharashtra, have wreaked havoc in nearby Belagavi, leading to compensation payouts of Rs 9 crore and an expenditure of Rs 20 crore in efforts to locate them.

In a recent success, the Belagavi forest department captured a wild elephant in the Khanapur forest in January. The operation involved two additional elephants from Sakrebailu, which swiftly completed the task in just half a day. Conversely, Maharashtra's efforts to locate the rogue elephants have proven fruitless after two months of operations.

Khanapur's Assistant Conservator of Forest, Sunita Nimbaragi, confirmed that a team of nine officials from Maharashtra underwent a week-long training session in Khanapur last week, with plans for further instruction in the coming days.

"We demonstrated the video of how the wild elephant was safely captured and returned to the deep forests of Khanapur," she explained.

Maharashtra has formally requested Karnataka to send a team of forest officials to aid in capturing the elephants, to which Karnataka has consented. *—Salar News*

Stones hurled at RSS training camp for children

THANE, 10 MARCH

Police registered an FIR against unidentified persons for allegedly throwing stones at an RSS training camp for children in Thane district of Maharashtra, an official said. Nobody was injured in the incident in Kachore village, Dombivli. Senior police inspector Vijay Kumar Kadam said police are analysing footage from various CCTV cameras in the locality to identify the attackers. "Some children from the RSS branch were training in the field when the incident occurred at 8pm. Based on the complaint, we have registered a case under various sections of BNS and launched an investigation," he said. A worker claimed stones had been thrown at the training sessions twice over a month. To ensure security in the area, additional police personnel have been deployed. *—PTI*

7 MP Cong leaders injured as stage collapses

BHOPAL, 10 MARCH

Seven leaders of the Congress party were injured when the stage they were addressing from collapsed in Bhopal, an MLA said. The incident occurred when the party leaders were addressing protesters near Rangmahal Square before marching towards the Madhya Pradesh Assembly, Congress MLA told. He said a protest was being staged against the state government's "anti-farmer" policies when the incident occurred. Congress workers marched towards the Assembly only to be stopped by police who used water cannons. "We have barricaded the area, and doing our job," police said. When asked about the number of the injured persons, the ADCP said she would check and hung up the call. Phone calls made to TT Nagar ACP Chandra Shekhar Pandey and Station House Officer Sudheer Arjariya remained unanswered. *—PTI*

VP Dhankhar recovering well at Delhi AIIMS

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar is recovering at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), and his progress is satisfactory, sources said. Dhankhar was admitted in the hospital at around 2am on Sunday after he complained of uneasiness and chest pain. The 73-year-old politician was admitted to the critical care unit under Dr Rajiv Narang, head of cardiology at AIIMS. He is being monitored by doctors. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the hospital on Sunday afternoon and inquired about Dhankhar's health. On X, Prime Minister said, "Went to AIIMS and inquired about the health of Vice-President Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar Ji. I pray for his good health and speedy recovery." *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

New Zealand PM Luxon to visit India on 16 March

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon is set to embark on a five-day visit to India, commencing on 16 March. The visit aims to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two nations, with a focus on trade and investment. During his visit, Luxon will hold talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 17 March, covering various aspects of India-New Zealand relations. He will also attend the inaugural session of the 10th Raisina Dialogue as the chief guest and deliver the keynote address. He will also visit Mumbai from 19 March, to 20 March, where he will engage with Indian business leaders and representatives from various sectors. *—PTI*

Rajya Sabha clears Railways Bill 2024

Oppn walked out after their discussion notices on voter ID issues and US funding were rejected

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Parliament on Monday cleared the Railways (Amendment) Bill 2024, aimed at enhancing the functioning and independence of the Railway Board. The bill, which repeals the Indian Railway Board Act, 1905, and integrates its provisions into the Railways Act, 1989, was passed in the Rajya Sabha through a voice vote, months after it secured approval in the Lok Sabha on 11 December, 2023.

The legislation, which seeks to streamline the administration of the Indian Railways, sparked a heated exchange in the Upper House between Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Opposition MPs. Critics, including Congress MP Vivek Tankha, dismissed the bill as a "cosmetic change" at a time when the railways require a comprehensive overhaul.

Responding sharply, Vaishnaw defended his credentials, stating, "Yes, I am a bureaucrat and a technocrat.

Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, P Nadda and others in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

But my commitment to the country is no less than that of a politician. If there is a problem with my commitment, then raise a finger, otherwise, you have no right to point a finger."

Opposition staged a walkout from Rajya Sabha after their notices for discussions on issues ranging from 'duplicate' voter ID cards to US funding to voter turnout were rejected, even as Union minister JP Nadda insisted that the government is ready to discuss any issue provided they are under the rules. MPs raised slogans after the deputy chairman of the House, Harivansh, said a dozen notices under Rule 267, which calls for setting aside the business of the day to take up discussions on urgent matters, have been rejected.

Citing the rejection, Harivansh did not allow Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge to make his submission.

Leader of the House and Union minister Nadda termed the walkout "irresponsible behaviour" and suggested that the opposition MPs, including Congress chief Kharge, should go for a refresher course on the rules of the House.

Speaking during Zero Hour in the lower house, leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi said that the voter lists "are being questioned across the country" and the entire opposition has been demanding a discussion on the matter. *—PTI*

FM tables Rs 35 K cr Manipur Budget

New Delhi, 10 March

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the Manipur budget for 2025-26, envisaging an expenditure of Rs 35,103.90 crore in Lok Sabha. Rs 15 crore has been provided for temporary shelter to internally displaced persons. Rs 100 crore for relief operation, and Rs 7 crore for compensation.

Rs 1.95 L crore GST evasion found

New Delhi, 10 March

Central GST officers have detected tax evasion of Rs 1.95 lakh crore in 25,397 cases in the April-January period, as per data shared in Lok Sabha. The total number of GST evasion cases detected in the last five years was 86,711 and the total detection was over Rs 6.79 lakh crore. *-PTI*

Bills of Lading for shipping passed

New Delhi, 10 March

The Lok Sabha passed The Bills of Lading Bill which seeks to provide a legal framework for the issuance of bills of lading. The government asserted that it will prevent any uncertainity amongst the investors. The bill of lading is evidence of a contract and is a legal document, not a contract. *-PTI*

CHHATTISGARH ASSEMBLY

Raids by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on premises linked to Chaitanya Baghel, son of former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister **PHOTO: PTI**

7 Congress MLAs suspended after Baghel ED raids

RAIPUR, 10 MARCH

Several Congress MLAs were suspended from Chhattisgarh assembly on Monday after they trooped into its well and shouted slogans against the ruling BJP over the ED's raids on the premises of former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel.

As the House assembled for the day's business, Congress legislators disrupted the Question Hour and raised the issue of the ED's raid.

They claimed that those questioning the alleged corruption in the government were being targeted using the central agency.

Congress members, including former minister Umesh Patel, started raising slogans against the ruling BJP and claimed the democracy was being "murdered".

Congress MLAs trooped into the well of the House while shouting slogans, and were automatically suspended, as per the assembly rules.

The speaker announced the suspension of various Congress members and asked them to go outside the House.

Congress claimed that ED raids were a "conspiracy to manage headlines" on a day when Parliament's Budget session reconvened.

Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said that the raids look like a "conspiracy" to manage headlines when the opposition is seeking to corner the government in Parliament over several issues.

Several Congress leaders came out in support of Baghel, saying suvch tactics would not deter him or the party from speaking against the BJP. *—PTI*

In a blow, Suvendu's close aide joins TMC

KOLKATA, 10 MARCH

BJP's Haldia MLA Tapasi Mondal, a close ally of Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari, joined the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC), delivering a significant blow to the BJP in Adhikari's stronghold of Purba Medinipur.

Mondal condemned the BJP's divisive politics and expressed her support for Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's developmental initiatives. The TMC welcomed her, citing growing disillusionment with the BJP. This defection comes amid ongoing tensions, with Adhikari denouncing Mondal as a political opportunist and noting that no other BJP members had defected alongside her.

In a separate but timely development, the West Bengal Legislative Assembly erupted in chaos on Monday when Speaker Biman Bandopadhyay suspended BJP MLA Dipak Barman for the remainder of the session and ordered marshals to eject two other BJP legislators, Shankar Ghosh and Manoj Oraon.

The uproar began when Hiran Chatterjee questioned the functioning of the public service commission, prompting the Speaker to switch off his microphone, which led to

Tapasi Mondal joined the TMC at its headquarters in the presence of state Power Minister Aroop Biswas **PHOTO: X**

accusations of silencing opposition voices.

Following this, Ghosh and Oraon shouted slogans, resulting in their removal from the chamber.

The BJP MLAs subsequently staged a walkout, expressing their outrage over the Speaker's actions. *—PTI*

Bihar BJP MLA asks Muslims to 'stay indoors' during Holi

PATNA, 10 MARCH

A Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA in Bihar has sparked outrage by urging Muslims to "stay indoors" during the Hindu festival of Holi, which coincides with the Islamic holy month of Ramazan this year.

Haribhushan Thakur Bachaul, the MLA from Bisfi assembly constituency in Madhubani district, made the remarks while speaking to reporters at the Vidhan Sabha premises. He claimed that Muslims should let Hindus celebrate the festival without taking offence.

His comments were met with sharp criticism from Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav, who accused Bachaul of trying to whip up communal tension. Yadav demanded

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav slammed MLA and accused him of trying to whip up communal tensions **PHOTO: PTI**

that Chief Minister Nitish Kumar reprimand Bachaul.

Yadav reminded Bachaul that Bihar has a history of foiling communal tensions and that Muslims in the state are protected by Hindus.

"It's not his father's rule," Yadav said.

"There should be a police complaint against him for trying to whip up communal tension," he added.

State Minority Affairs Minister Zama Khan assured that the administration will ensure harmony during the festive season. *—PTI*

Ex-MLA Dhangekar to quit Cong; hints switch to Shiv Sena

PUNE, 10 MARCH

Former Congress MLA Ravindra Dhangekar said he would quit the party and indicated that he might join the Eknath Shinde led Shiv Sena. There has been speculation for the last few months that Dhangekar, might join the ruling Shiv Sena.

Dhangekar said he would meet Shinde and after that, a final decision would be taken. "It is painful to leave the Congress. Everybody made efforts for me in the elections but there are sentiments of my supporters and voters that I should take a decision to ensure that development works," he said. Dhangekar said he recently met Shinde as well as Cabinet Minister Uday Samant, who offered him to work with them. *—PTI*

Designers apologise for J&K fashion show

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

The Delhi-based designer duo Shivan & Narresh has issued an apology following backlash from their recent fashion show in Gulmarg, displaying what many deemed "obscene" garments during the holy month of Ramadan.

The show, which showcased their skiwear collection on 7 March to celebrate their label's 15th anniversary, drew condemnation from local leaders, including Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who has ordered an inquiry into the event, stating it showed "complete disregard for local sensitivities." *—PTI*

Photos showed 'semi- nude' men and women walk the ramp at the fashion show in Gulmarg, on Monday **PHOTO: ANI**

Puducherry holds first paperless assembly

PUDUCHERRY, 10 MARCH

The territorial Assembly has gone paperless. The House had its first session as a paperless meeting on Monday while the Lieutenant Governor K Kailshnathan was presenting his customary address.

All the necessary infrastructure was in place as a significant feature of the Assembly going paperless.

The transition to a paperless system was made possible by the introduction of the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA), a national project aimed at transforming India into a digitally equipped society.

The Union Parliamentary Affairs Ministry provided funding of Rs 8.16crore to support the initiative. All members, were e quipped with tablets on their desks.

"It was a thrilling experience to use the tabs as part of the paperless session," a legislator told PTI.

Necessary training has been provided for the legislators to acquaint themselves with new experience. *—PTI*

'NO BACKDOOR ENTRY'

Digital, social media access not misused: I-T

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

The new Income Tax Bill prescribes the existing process for tax authorities to gain access to the digital space only during search and survey operations, and it is not aimed to breach the online privacy of common taxpayers IT department officials claimed.

An official rejected allegations made in some reports and opinion pieces that the tax authorities have been granted "additional" powers to breach the passwords of electronic records, including email, social media handles and Cloud storage space of the taxpayers.

"Such reports are nothing but fear mongering. The tax department is not into snooping of social media accounts or online activities of a taxpayer. These powers are only to be executed during the course of a search or survey operation, and that too when the assessee being searched or surveyed refuses to share the passwords," the officer told PTI.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Section 247 of the Income Tax Bill, 2025, which is currently before Parliament, prescribes an authorised officer to gain access by 'over-riding' the access code of computer system or 'virtual digital space'.

"Tax crimes and the methods of tax evasion have attained a new level of sophistication," the official said.

"Gaining access to digital devices and spaces during coercive actions like search and survey is vital to find evidence," a second official said.

"The provisions related to 'virtual digital space' are not applicable even to cases under scrutiny. It is applied only during the process of a search or survey and not before this action is mounted. The tax department does not snoop or make a backdoor entry against any individual through their social media accounts," the first official added. *—PTI*

M'rashtra minister: 8 farmers suicides per day 'partially true'

MUMBAI, 10 MARCH

Maharashtra Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Makarand Jadhav-Patil said it was 'partially true' that eight farmers, on average, died by suicide daily in the past 56 months in the state.

Jadhav said the number of farmer suicides in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (952) and Amravati (1069) divisions was higher compared to other regions.

168 farmers died by suicide in Akola, 112 in Wardha, and 205 in Beed

The minister outlined factors contributing to the suicides by farmers and the government's efforts to support the affected families and gave details for all who had received financial aid.

Makarand Jadhav-Patil **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

In Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, 707 were eligible for assistance and in 433 cases the assistance was received while in Beed district, 167 cases were approved for assistance and 108 cases received financial aid. In Amravati division, 441 cases were eligible for assistance and 332 received the aid, the minister stated.

"The government is committed to providing support to the families of farmers who committed suicide," the minister added. *—PTI*

Violent clashes erupt after CT win

2 Gujarat districts saw violence; Hyderabad police lathi-charged mob of 5K; 13 held in MP

MHOW/ ANDHINAGAR/ HYDERABAD 10 MARCH

After India's ICC Champions Trophy victory on Sunday, violence erupted in multiple places across the country during celebrations and rallies. In Mhow, near Indore and in Gujarat's Gandhinagar the incidents took place near mosques, with a suspected communal angle while in Hyderabad, the incident involved police lathi-charging celebrating mob of five thousand, who blocked traffic and climbed busses.

Madhya Pradesh

Thirteen persons were arrested in connection with five incidents of violence in Madhya Pradesh's Mhow town after stone pelting at a rally, officials said. The incident began near a mosque, where there was dispute over bursting of firecrackers, leading to physical altercations and stone attacks.

Four persons suffered injuries in the incident which took place late Sunday night, Indore Collector Ashish Singh told reporters.

Mhow police station in-charge Rahul Sharma said three cars and a dozen two-wheelers were attacked and set ablaze after the initial altercation. At least two shops have also been vandalised.

"Peace is restored in the area at present. Nobody will be spared and stringent action will be taken against those responsible for it," he said.

A large contingent of security personnel arrived in Mhow late Sunday night, as tension gripped the town.

Gujarat

At least 11 people were detained after a late-night motorcycle rally was attacked in Gujarat's Gandhinagar district.

As per the first information report, the rally was passing by a mosque in a minority-dominated area around 10.30pm when the bikers raced their two-wheelers, blaring horns. Around 15 persons sitting in the mosque for the ongoing Ramzan festival objected to this and began attacking bikers with sticks.

Deputy Superintendent of Police P N Vanda said, "Most bikers left after being confronted by people objecting to the noise. The accused persons damaged the two-wheelers that were left behind."

Except for the complainant, who sustained a fracture due to a fall while trying to escape, nobody was injured in the incident, Vanda said.

Telangana

In Hyderabad, police reportedly lathi-charged a large group of people celebrating through the streets. The group of approximately five thousand people, were allegedly disrupting traffic while celebrating.

The group, consisting primarily of students from the area began climbing busses in excitement, police said, which warranted the police's charge.

Videos of the lathi charge have gone viral on social media. *—PTI with agencies*

Communal clashes broke out in MP's Mhow during celebrations after India's CT win, on Sunday **PHOTO: X**

45 minors rescued from trafficking racket in Bihar

PATNA/SASARAM, 10 MARCH

45 children, including 42 girls, from trafficking and exploitation in Bihar. The operation, dubbed "Operation Natraj", conducted in Rohtas district, involved raids at several locations and led to the arrest of five individuals involved in the trafficking ring. According to Superintendent of Police Roshan Kumar, the operation was launched after a tip-off from an NGO about minors being hired by orchestra parties and forced to live in appalling conditions. The children, mostly from outside Bihar, were lured with promises of jobs, marriage, and financial security. The rescued children are undergoing rehabilitation, and efforts are being made to reunite them with their families. The operation highlights the ongoing issue of child trafficking in India. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Jalna man detected with Gullain-Barre Syndrome

JALNA, 10 MARCH

A 23-year-old man has been detected with Gullain-Barre Syndrome, a rare neurological disorder, in Maharashtra's Jalna district, a health official said on Monday. The man, who has been unwell for several days, was diagnosed with GBS on March 9, Government Health Officer Dr Gajanan Mhakse told PTI. "He has improved and his condition is stable now. We are closely monitoring the patient's condition," Mhaske added. GBS is a rare condition where a person's immune system attacks the peripheral nerves, resulting in muscle weakness, loss of sensation in the legs and arms as well as problems swallowing and breathing. *—PTI*

Vanuatu to cancel Lalit Modi's passport

PORT VILA, 10 MARCH

Vanuatu Prime Minister Jotham Napat directed the Citizenship Commission to cancel the passport issued to Indian Premier League (IPL) founder Lalit Modi. Napat said that the fugitive was attempting to avoid extradition.

An official media release by the Republic of Vanuatu stated, "I have instructed the Citizenship Commission to cancel the Vanuatu passport issued to Lalit Modi following recent revelations in international media."

"While all standard background checks, including Interpol screenings, conducted during his application showed no criminal convictions, I have been made aware in the past 24 hours that Interpol twice rejected Indian authorities' requests to issue an alert notice on Lalit Modi due to lack of substantive judicial evidence," the statement said. Napat said any such "alert" would have triggered an automatic rejection of Lalit Modi's citizenship application.

Last week, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Modi has filed an application with the Indian high commission in London to surrender his Indian passport.

"He has made an application for surrendering his passport in the high commission of India, London," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. If Modi's request for cancellation of the Indian passport is accepted, then he may become an illegal alien in the UK as Vanuatu is also revoking his citizenship.

India doesn't have a mission in Vanuatu and the Indian high commission in New Zealand handles relations with the island nation.

The former IPL chief is wanted by Indian law enforcement agencies in connection with allegations over embezzlement of crores of rupees during his stint as the top boss of the IPL. He absconded from India in 2010. *—PTI*

Scribe held for remarks against minister's aide

PUNE, 10 MARCH

Police have arrested Tushar Kharat, a journalist and the editor of Lay Bhari, a YouTube channel for allegedly making derogatory remarks against an aide of Maharashtra Minister Jaykumar Gore, and for attempting to extort Rs 5 crore from the minister.

Opposition leaders had recently demanded Gore's resignation over allegations of him harassing a woman and sending objectionable photos to her. Gore said court acquitted him in 2019. *—PTI*

Man gets death in 2018 Telangana honour killing

HYDERABAD, 10 MARCH

A court in Nalgonda district, Telangana, has sentenced one man to death for his role in the honour killing of a Dalit man in 2018. Subhash Kumar Sharma received the capital punishment, while six other co-accused were handed life sentences, a senior police official confirmed.

The case centres around the murder of Pranay Kumar, 23, who was killed after marrying an upper-caste woman in September 2018, sparking widespread outrage in the state. On 18 September 2018, authorities arrested eight individuals, including the woman's father, Maruti Rao, and her uncle, in what was determined to be a contract killing that involved a payment of Rs 1 crore.

The prosecution established that Maruti Rao, opposed to his daughter's marriage, conspired to kill Kumar and paid an advance of Rs 15 lakh to the hired assassins. Notably, two of the arrested individuals were previously acquitted in the murder of former Gujarat home minister Haren Pandya.

In a tragic turn of events, Maruti Rao reportedly died by suicide at a lodge in 2020. This high-profile case has highlighted issues of caste and familial honour in India, eliciting significant public and media attention. *—PTI*

Tunnel collapse victim's body sent to native place

Family members of Gurpreet Singh, who was among 8 workers trapped after Telangana tunnel collapse, mourn his death **PHOTO: PTI**

NAGARKURNOOL, 10 MARCH

The remains of Gurpreet Singh, a Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) operator for Robbins Co, have been sent back to his native Punjab following recovery from the SLBC tunnel that partially collapsed on 22 February. Singh was one of eight workers trapped inside the tunnel, and his body was identified through a distinctive earring and a tattoo.

After careful excavation efforts lasting over 48 hours, officials were able to extricate Singh's body, which was buried under silt at a depth of approximately 10 feet. The body was transported in a special ambulance after post-mortem procedures at the Nagarkurnool civil hospital. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs 25 lakh to Singh's family.

The search continues for the remaining seven workers, who include Manoj Kumar from Uttar Pradesh, Sunny Singh from Jammu and Kashmir, and several others from Jharkhand. Rescue operations are being supported by experts from the NDRF, Indian Army, Navy, and various agencies in a concerted effort to locate and bring the missing individuals to safety. *—PTI*

HC questions ASI on whitewashing Sambhal mosque

PRAYAGRAJ, 10 MARCH

The Allahabad High Court has instructed the counsel for the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to clarify the potential prejudice caused by the proposed whitewashing of the outer walls of the Jama Masjid in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh. Justice Rohit Ranjan Agarwal issued this directive during a hearing concerning objections raised by the mosque committee, which is seeking approval solely for whitewashing and lighting the exterior of the mosque.

The High Court has scheduled the next hearing for 22 March and has ordered the Sambhal district magistrate to present the original 1927 agreement that facilitated the transfer of mosque to ASI.

On 28 February, the ASI reported that the interior of the mosque had been painted with ceramic colour, deeming further whitewashing unnecessary. Court instructed the ASI to clear dust and overgrown grass from premises. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

IN PUNJAB

Cops arrests FBI-wanted drug dealer

CHANDIGARH, 10 MARCH

The Punjab police have arrested a notorious international drug dealer, Shehnaz Singh, also known as Shawn Bhinder. Bhinder, who was wanted by the FBI, was a key player in a global narcotics syndicate, responsible for smuggling cocaine from Colombia into the US and Canada.

He was wanted by the FBI in one of the largest drug seizures in the US on 26 February, 2025, where the agency had arrested six of his associates and seized 391 kg methamphetamine, 109 kg cocaine, four sophisticated weapons and vehicles from their possession.

The arrest was made by the Tarn Taran police, and Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav announced the news on social media. Yadav stated that Bhinder was a "big fish" in the global narcotics syndicate. *—PTI*

Punjab Police take away Shehnaz Singh alias Shawn Bhinder, after his arrest, in Tarn Taran, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Giani now a jathedar amid controversy

CHANDIGARH, 10 MARCH

Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj was appointed the jathedar of Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib in Anandpur Sahib on Monday, despite strong opposition from various Nihang groups. They asserted that the 'Khalsa Panth' would never accept his leadership.

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) appointed Gargaj after removing the previous jathedars, Giani Raghbir Singh and Giani Sultan Singh. The installation ceremony was held at 2.50am instead of the scheduled 10 am, reportedly due to threats aimed at disrupting the event.

Gargaj called for unity within the Sikh community, emphasising the need to adhere to the unalterable edicts issued by the Akal Takht on 2 December . Various Sikh leaders, including senior Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) member Bikram Singh Majithia, condemned the SGPC's decision.

Concerned about the growing divisions within the Sikh community, Gargaj pledged to initiate outreach programs and foster dialogue among Sikh leaders. *—PTI*

3 kids among 5 charred to death in Jharkhand

GARHWA, 10 MARCH

At least five persons, including three children, were charred to death after a fire broke out at a firecracker shop in Jharkhand's Garhwa on Monday, a police officer said. "Five persons were killed after a blaze erupted at a firecracker shop here. Of these, three are children. We are investigating the incident," Garhwa SP Deepak Pandey told PTI. Ranka SDPO Rohit Ranjan Singh said the fire broke out around 12.30pm, while crackers were being sold on a wooden platform in the shop. The injured were rushed to a nearby hospital where they were declared dead on arrival. The cause of the blaze has not yet been ascertained. Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar and Chief Minister Hemant Soren expressed grief over the loss of lives in the incident. *—PTI*

Calcutta HC Judge Bagchi Appointed to Supreme Court

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Justice Joymalya Bagchi, a judge at the Calcutta High Court, has been appointed to the Supreme Court of India. The appointment was announced by Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, following a recommendation by the Supreme Court Collegium on 6 March. He will serve a tenure of over six years, during which he will also assume the role of Chief Justice of India. He succeeds Justice KV Viswanathan, who retires on 25 May, 2031. With over 13 years of experience as a high court judge, Justice Bagchi brings significant expertise in diverse fields of law. His appointment strengthens Calcutta's representation in the top court. Once he takes oath, the Supreme Court will have 33 judges, just one short of its sanctioned strength of 34. *—PTI*

'FEARED DROWNED'

Indian-origin student missing in Dominican Republic

SANTO DOMINGO, 10 MARCH

A 20-year-old Indian-origin student, Sudiksha Konanki, from the University of Pittsburgh, has been reported missing from a resort in the Dominican Republic. She had travelled there with friends for their spring break.

According to reports, Konaki was last seen on 6 March, while travelling with a group on the beach of the Riu Republica Hotel in the resort town of Punta Cana.

The Indian Embassy in the Dominican Republic confirmed it was in contact with Konanki's parents. "An Indian national, who is studying in the United States, is missing since 6 March 2025 while on her vacation to Puntacana in the Dominican Republic," it wrote on X. "Embassy is in touch with her parents and extending all assistance in coordination with government authorities of the Dominican Republic."

Sudiksha **PHOTO: INSTAGRAM**

"Our office was contacted on Thursday evening about a missing female from Loudoun County who was with a group of other people traveling in the Dominican Republic, Punta Cana specifically," a office spokesperson said.

In a statement, the University of Pittsburgh officials said they were working with Konanki's family and local authorities in Virginia. "University officials are in contact with Sudiksha Konanki's family as well as authorities in Loudoun County, Virginia, and we have offered our full support in their efforts to find her and bring her home safely," university spokesperson Jared Stonesifer said. *—Agencies*

5-yr-old killed in suspected human sacrifice in Gujarat

BODELI, 10 MARCH

In a shocking incident in Chhotaudepur district, a man allegedly murdered a five-year-old girl by slitting her throat and offering her blood on the steps of a temple. The suspect, identified as Lala Tadvi, abducted the victim from her home in Panej village in front of her mother on Monday morning, according to Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Gaurav Agrawal.

Following the abduction, Tadvi reportedly took the girl to his residence, where he inflicted fatal injuries using an axe. He then collected the blood that flowed from her neck and offered it on the steps of a small temple located within his home, as her mother and local villagers looked on in horror, powerless to intervene due to Tadvi's threat with the weapon.

- Tadvi reportedly took the girl to his residence, where he inflicted fatal injuries using an axe. He then collected the blood that flowed from her neck and offered it on the steps of a small temple

ASP Agrawal noted that Tadvi does not appear to be an occult practitioner, leaving the motive for the gruesome act unclear.

An investigation is currently underway. A First Information Report (FIR) has been filed against Tadvi based on a complaint from the girl's family, charging him with murder and abduction under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. *—PTI*

UP man beheads girlfriend over marriage pressure

BAHRAICH, 10 MARCH

A UP man was arrested for allegedly beheading his girlfriend when she repeatedly asked him to marry her, police said.

The case came to light when police found a headless body in Jagganthpur.

Police arrested Asif Raza, 24, after investigations. During the questioning, he confessed to the murder, stating that he killed his girlfriend because she insistently asked him to marry her. Police said that Raza was influenced by the Telugu movie 'Salaar,' luring his girlfriend to a canal where he beheaded her.

"He was caught fleeing to Nepal on Sunday, with police recovering the head, weapon, and other evidence. The accused has been sent to jail on judicial custody," the officer said. *—PTI*

MEXICO CELEBRATES

Tens of thousands gathered in Mexico City's main plaza on Sunday to celebrate with President Claudia Sheinbaum after the US postponed tariffs on many Mexican goods
PHOTO: PTI

Hitman Rohit & iceman Gill gave India winning edge

Rohit Sharma exposed all his stumps and biffed New Zealand pacer Nathan Smith over the cow corner for a 92 meter six in the sixth over of the Champions Trophy final here.

Eight overs later, Gill broke the shackles, launching Rachin Ravindra over long-on for a six through a little shimmy and an effortless swing of the bat.

Both shots fetched maximum results. But Rohit's shot exemplified his desire to dominate the bowlers regardless of the situation or the merit of the ball, while Gill's was a reflection of his willingness to wait for his chances.

This is how they operate. The Rohit-Gill opening partnership is a convergence of contrasts like all the great pairs of the past.

Roll the years back and you will have West Indies' Gordon Greenidge and Desmond Haynes, India's Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly or Australia's Matthew Hayden and Adam Gilchrist, they make each other greater by feeding on their partner's strength.

Here, Rohit's aggression is Gill's feeding point. The Punjab man knows that he does not need to take any undue risks because an intrinsically aggressive batter is on the other side.

He can take his time to settle down before switching to an upper gear.

India's first match in the ICC showpiece against Bangladesh will give a clearer picture. The Indian openers made 69 in 9.5 overs, and 41 of those came off Rohit's bat.

Gill was on 23-ball 26 at this stage, but soon settled down and eventually got a hundred in the team's six-wicket win.

In the final against Kiwis too, Rohit did the early running and he was batting on a 63-ball 69 when Gill got out for a 50-ball 31.

Actually, the smooth-sailing alliance could have blossomed further had it not been for Glenn Phillips' flying catch to dismiss Gill.

The roles have been well-defined between these two, and it reflects in their record so far as well. From 32 matches, Rohit and Gill have made 2124 runs together at an average of 68.51 with seven hundred partnerships and 12 fifty-plus stands.

Captian Rohit Sharma with opener Shubman Gill during the Champions Trophy finals against New Zealand in Dubai, on Sunday
PHOTO: PTI

Rohit explained how he operates with Gill.

"He's got so much class about his batting. And then it's, for both of us, just about having that constant communication of how to take the game forward and building that partnership. When we are batting together, obviously, both of us like to play shots.

"He likes to pierce the field. I like to go aerial. So, it actually works both ways and works well, which is why there's been a lot of consistency in our partnership. And Gill, to be honest, understands this game really well," said Rohit.

These different methods to find boundaries, in fact, can confuse the bowlers as they need to regularly alter their line and length, and eventually they can lose the radar.

New Zealand skipper Mitchell Santner acknowledged it.

"His (Rohit's) approach puts fear in bowlers. He is kind of aggressive in nature. I think him and Shubman dovetail well. Shubman will wait for a bad ball, but Rohit is pretty happy to hit bowlers off their lengths.

"I guess the way he goes about it, you might fail a few times, but, like he (Rohit) did today, if you can really get your team off to a flyer, especially on a slow wicket, you put yourself kind of ahead of the game," said Santner.

Their partnership of 105 while chasing a tricky 252 was vital as it nearly whittled down the target by half.

However, the success of Rohit-Gill combine was essential for India because Shikhar Dhawan was eased out in 2022 after walking out to start their team's innings for almost nine years.

The Rohit-Dhawan, which also gave India the right-left option at the pole position, combine had amassed 5148 runs from 115 matches at an average of 45 with 18 stands in excess of 100.

India did try to pair KL Rahul with Rohit and it produced results too, 992 runs in 11 matches at a mind-boggling average of 90.18 with five century partnerships.

However, the team combination demands mandated the demotion of Rahul to middle-order and India required another batter to give company to Rohit for a longer duration.

Gill fitted that bill perfectly. His predecessor Dhawan explained it.

"He's got a tremendous game sense. His consistency and skill level is top notch. He knows when to hold back and when to unleash. At such a young age, to have the art of scoring centuries is great," he said.

With Indian skipper in no mood to retire anytime soon from ODIs, we might just see a few more duets of destruction.
—PTI

LETTERS write to us at salar@salar.news

SALAR سالار

40% with chronic pain could have anxiety, depression: Study

About 40 per cent of adults experiencing chronic, persistent pain could also have anxiety or depression, a study has found.

It observed that women, youngsters and those suffering from nociplastic pain such as fibromyalgia are most likely to experience such pain.

Nociplastic pain arises from changes in how ones central nervous system processes pain. Fibromyalgia is a condition marked by widespread body ache and tenderness, along with fatigue, and mood and sleep disorders.

During the study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open, the researchers reviewed 376 surveys, involving nearly 3.5 lakh people from across 50 countries. The participants were aged about 50 years on average, and about 70 per cent were women.

The most commonly reported chronic pain conditions in the study included fibromyalgia, low back pain and rheumatoid arthritis (inflammation of joints). Pain is said to be chronic if it persists beyond a maximum of three months.

"In this systematic review and meta-analysis of depression and anxiety among individuals with chronic pain, approximately 40 per cent of adults had clinically significant depression and anxiety," the authors wrote.

Therefore, a mental health screening of patients with chronic pain is critical, they said.

While acute pain can be caused by an injury or surgery, its transition to chronic pain has psychological undertones, according to the biopsychosocial model of pain.

Developed in the 1970s, the model suggests that one's experience of pain in response to an external trigger is a complex interplay of biological, psychological, social and cultural factors.

Women are considered especially vulnerable to chronic pain, owing to varied factors, including hormonal cycles and heightened emotional responses.

Further, "women, younger people, and people with nociplastic pain (arising from changes in how one perceives pain) were most likely to have depression and anxiety," the authors wrote.

According to a 2023 roundup article on pain research in The Lancet journal, the biopsychosocial risk factors of poor sleep, despondency, tiredness, stress and a Body Mass Index of over 30 were the most important reasons for localised pain progressing into chronic pain.

While treatments commonly involve anti-inflammatory drugs and prescription medicines, such as antidepressants and opioids, experts strongly recommend psychotherapy sessions as well.

"Treatments for the most common types of chronic pain (Examples: fibromyalgia, chronic low back pain) have limited impact on pain intensity, meaning many people will live with their pain long-term," said Dr Bronwyn Thompson, senior lecturer, department of orthopaedic surgery and musculoskeletal medicine, University of Otago, New Zealand. He was not involved in the study.

Dr Debbie Bean, a health psychologist and senior lecturer, Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand, said living with chronic pain can affect many aspects of one's life, including work and social relationships.

"People with chronic pain can also experience stigma, where others don't take their pain seriously, or they may even feel disbelieved or judged for their pain. So, it is not just the pain itself but the effects it has on a person's life that mean that chronic pain can lead to both anxiety and depression," said Dr Bean, who was not involved in the review.

Further, given that depression and anxiety can influence how body's nervous system responds to painful experiences, the two problems — chronic pain and poor mental health — can become a vicious cycle, Dr Bean said.
—PTI

The most commonly reported chronic pain conditions in the study included fibromyalgia, low back pain and rheumatoid arthritis (inflammation of joints)
PHOTO: PIXABAY

DOGE threat: How govt data would give an AI firm power

The Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, has secured unprecedented access to at least seven sensitive federal databases, including those of the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration. This access has sparked fears about cybersecurity vulnerabilities and privacy violations. Another concern has received far less attention: the potential use of the data to train a private company's artificial intelligence systems.

The White House press secretary said government data that DOGE has collected isn't being used to train Musk's AI models, despite Elon Musk's control over DOGE. However, evidence has emerged that DOGE personnel simultaneously hold positions with at least one of Musk's companies.

At the Federal Aviation Administration, SpaceX employees have government email addresses. This dual employment creates a conduit for federal data to potentially be siphoned to Musk-owned enterprises, including xAI. The company's latest Grok AI chatbot model conspicuously refuses to give a clear denial about using such data.

As a political scientist and technologist who is intimately acquainted with public sources of government data, I believe this potential transmission of government data to private companies presents far greater privacy and power implications than most reporting identifies. A private entity with the capacity to develop artificial intelligence technologies could use government data to leapfrog its competitors and wield massive influence over society.

Value of government data for AI

For AI developers, government databases represent something akin to finding the Holy Grail. While companies such as OpenAI, Google and xAI currently rely on information scraped from the public internet, nonpublic government repositories offer something much more valuable: verified records of actual human behavior across entire populations.

This isn't merely more data – it's fundamentally different data. Social media posts and web browsing histories show curated or intended behaviors, but government databases capture real decisions and their consequences. For example, Medicare records reveal health care choices and outcomes. IRS and Treasury data reveal financial decisions and long-term impacts.

And federal employment and education statistics reveal education paths and career trajectories.

The White House press secretary said government data that DOGE has collected isn't being used to train Musk's AI models, despite Elon Musk's control over DOGE
PHOTO: AI

The technical advantage

Current AI systems face fundamental limitations that no amount of data scraped from the internet can overcome. When ChatGPT or Google's Gemini make mistakes, it's often because they've been trained on information that might be popular but isn't necessarily true. They can tell you what people say about a policy's effects, but they can't track those effects across populations and years.

Government data could change this equation. Imagine training an AI system not just on opinions about health care but on actual treatment outcomes across millions of patients. Consider the difference between learning from social media discussions about economic policies and analyzing their real impacts across different communities and demographics over decades.

Control of critical systems

Medicare and Medicaid databases contain records of treatments, outcomes and costs across diverse populations over decades. A frontier model trained on new government data could identify treatment patterns that succeed where others fail, and so dominate the health care industry. Such a model could understand how different interventions affect various populations over time, accounting for factors such as geographic location, socioeconomic status and concurrent conditions.

A company wielding the model could influence health care policy by demonstrating superior predictive capabilities and market population-level insights to pharmaceutical companies and insurers.

An AI company with access to this data could develop extraordinary capabilities for economic forecasting and market prediction. It could model the cascading effects of regulatory changes, predict economic vulnerabilities before they become crises, and optimize investment strategies with precision impossible through traditional methods.

Infrastructure and urban systems

Government databases contain information about critical infrastructure usage patterns, maintenance histories, emergency response times and development impacts. Every federal grant, infrastructure inspection and emergency response creates a data point that could help train AI to better understand how cities and regions function.

The power lies in the potential interconnectedness of this data. An AI system trained on government infrastructure records would understand how transportation patterns affect energy use, how housing policies affect emergency response times, and how infrastructure investments influence economic development across regions.

Absolute data corrupts absolutely

A company such as xAI, with Musk's resources and preferential access through DOGE, could surmount technical and political obstacles far more easily than competitors. Recent advances in machine learning have also reduced the burdens of preparing data for the algorithms to process, making government data a veritable gold mine – one that belongs to American people.

Since information is power, concentrating unprecedented data in the hands of a private entity with an explicit political agenda represents a profound challenge to the republic. I believe that the question is whether the American people can stand up to the potentially democracy-shattering corruption such a concentration would enable. If not, Americans should prepare to become digital subjects rather than human citizens..
—The Conversation

PHOTO: PTI

US, S Korea resume military drills post bombing gaffe

SEOUL, 10 MARCH

South Korea and the United States on Monday began their annual joint military exercises, but they paused live-fire training while Seoul investigates how two of its fighter jets mistakenly bombed a civilian area last week. The modified Freedom Shield exercise, which combines computer simulations and field training and runs through 20 March, still drew the condemnation of nuclear-armed North Korea, which issued a government statement calling the drill a "dangerous provocative act" that increases the risks of military conflict. About 30 people were injured when two South Korean KF-16 fighter jets mistakenly dropped eight MK-82 bombs on a civilian area in Pocheon, a town near the North Korean border in a live-fire drill. *—PTI*

South Africa's playwright Athol Fugard dies at 92

CAPE TOWN, 10 MARCH

Athol Fugard, South Africa's foremost dramatist who explored the pervasiveness of apartheid in such searing works as "The Blood Knot" and "Master Harold... and the Boys", has died. He was 92. The South African government confirmed Fugard's death and said the country "has lost one of its greatest literary and theatrical icons, whose work shaped the cultural and social landscape of our nation". Six of Fugard's plays landed on Broadway, including two productions of "Master Harold'... and the Boys", in 1982 and 2003. Fugard once said that the best theatre in Africa would come from South Africa because the country's "daily tally of injustice and brutality has forced a maturity of thinking and feeling and an awareness of basic values I do not find equalled anywhere in Africa". *—PTI*

Greenland goes to polls amid Trump's 'take over' threats

NUUK, 10 MARCH

Greenlanders will trudge across ice and snow on 11 March to cast their ballots in an election that could prove to be one of the most consequential in the Arctic island's history.

Amid United States President Donald Trump's repeated threats to take over Greenland, voters in the self-ruling Danish territory will elect 31 members of its legislature, the Inatsisartut, as they do every four years.

"The politicians have not been very clear about what independence really is," Masaana Egede, editor-in-chief of the Greenlandic daily Sermitsiaq, told a video briefing with international journalists last week. *—Politico*

Protest freezes operations at 13 German airports

BERLIN, 10 MARCH

A one-day strike by workers at 13 German airports, including the Frankfurt and Munich hubs and all the country's other main destinations, caused the cancelation of most flights on Monday. The 24-hour walkout, which started at midnight, involves public-sector employees at the airports as well as ground and security staff. At Frankfurt Airport, 1,054 of the day's 1,116 scheduled take-offs and landings had been cancelled, reports said. All of Berlin Airport's regular departures and arrivals were cancelled, while Hamburg Airport said no departures would be possible. Cologne/Bonn Airport said there was no regular passenger service and Munich Airport advised travellers to expect a "greatlyreduced flight schedule." *—PTI*

Canada will win trade war: Carney

Liberal Party leader Carney, who replaces Trudeau, makes his stand clear to Trump

OTTAWA, 10 MARCH

Canada's next prime minister Mark Carney slammed US President Donald Trump for "unjustified tariffs", saying Americans should make no mistake as Canada will win the trade war just as it wins in hockey.

Carney, who won the election for the leadership of the ruling Liberal Party to succeed Justin Trudeau as prime minister, in his victory speech Sunday also hit out at the American president for suggesting that Canada should join America as its 51st state.

"America is not Canada. And Canada never, ever, will be part of America in any way, shape, or form. We didn't ask for this fight, but Canadians are always ready when someone else drops the gloves," 59-year-old Carney said.

"So, Americans should make no mistake... In trade, as in hockey, Canada will win. But this victory will not be easy. We are facing the most significant crisis of our lives. We will have to do extraordinary things ... together," he said.

In his speech, the former head of Canada's central bank attacked Trump, saying there's someone who's trying to weaken our economy.

He said that the Canadian government is rightly retaliating with its own tariffs that will have maximum impact in the United States.

"My government will keep our tariffs on until the Americans show us respect ... And make credible, reliable commitments to free and fair trade," he said. "Americans want our resources, our water, our land, our country. Think about that for a moment. If they succeed, they will destroy our way of life," Carney said, apparently referring to Trump's suggestion to make Canada the 51st state of the United States.

"America is a melting pot. Canada is a mosaic. America does not recognize differences," Carney said. "The joy of living, culture, and the French language are part of our identity. We must protect them; we must promote them. We will never, ever, trade them for any trade deal!" *—PTI*

My government will keep our tariffs on until the Americans show us respect ... And make credible, reliable commitments to free and fair trade
—Mark Carney

Mark Carney hit out at US President Donald Trump on Sunday for suggesting that Canada should join America as its 51st state PHOTO: X

MIKE CARNEY

BORN: 16 March 1965 (59, Fort Smith, Northwest)
Liberal Party Leader: Since 9 March, 2025

FAMILY: Married to Diana Fox (4 children)

EDUCATION:
- Harvard (BA Economics)
- Oxford (MPhil, DPhil)

CAREER:
- Worked at Goldman Sachs
- Bank of Canada Deputy Governor (2003), Governor (2007)
- Bank of England Governor (2013)
- UN Special Envoy for Climate Change (2019)
- Founded Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (2021)

LEADERSHIP:
- Helped Canada navigate the 2008 recession

CONTROVERSY:
- In 2015, his policy inconsistencies as Governor of the Bank of England led a UK MP to dub him the "unreliable boyfriend"
- The Conservatives accused him of lying about Brookfield's HQ move from Toronto to New York

Trudeau: One of Canada's longest-serving PMs

TORONTO, 10 MARCH

Justin Trudeau, who served as Canada's Prime Minister from 4 November, 2015, to 9 March, 2025, became one of the longest-serving leaders in the country's history, holding office for over nine years. Although his tenure was notable for its longevity, he did not surpass the record set by William Lyon Mackenzie King, who served for over 21 years across three non-consecutive terms.

Other long-serving leaders include Sir John A. Macdonald, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, each serving more than 15 years. Trudeau is the son of Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, who dominated the country's politics in the 1970s and '80s.

Trudeau's leadership saw major policy shifts in climate action, social reforms and economic policies, though his administration also faced challenges, including public dissatisfaction over inflation, housing crises, and ethical controversies. Despite these hurdles, his decade-long governance marked a significant era in modern Canadian politics, shaping the country's domestic and international stance on key issues.

His record includes a commitment to gender equality in his cabinet, which continues to be 50 per cent women; progress on reconciliation with Indigenous people in Canada; bringing in a national carbon tax; implementing a tax-free child benefit for families; and legalising recreational cannabis. *—Agencies*

- Trudeau's leadership saw major policy shifts in climate action, social reforms and economic policies, though his administration also faced challenges, including public dissatisfaction over inflation

Government shut down is possible, says Trump

WASHINGTON, 10 MARCH

US President Donald Trump told reporters that a US government shutdown "could happen" if the House fails to pass a temporary funding bill, though he expressed confidence it would be approved. The bill, a six-month stopgap measure unveiled by House Republicans on 7 March, is set for a vote on Tuesday.

Trump urged Republicans on social media to support it, calling it crucial for stabilizing the country's finances.

Asked whether he expects a recession this year, Donald Trump said, "I hate to predict things like that. There is a period of transition because what we're doing is very big."

He also stated: "We're bringing wealth back to America. That's a big thing.

In a joint session of Congress on 4 March, Donald Trump also acknowledged an "adjustment period", saying, "There'll be a little disturbance, but we're okay with that. It won't be much" as tariffs take effect, the Bloomberg report added."

"All Republicans should vote (Please!) YES next week," Trump posted on social media on Saturday. *—Agencies*

Donald Trump PHOTO: ANI

US Air Force intercepts plane flying near Trump's home

West Palm Beach, 10 March

US Air Force fighter jets intercepted a civilian aircraft flying in the temporarily restricted airspace near Donald Trump's Florida home on Sunday, bringing the number of violations to more than 20 since the president took office on 20 January, the North American Aerospace Defense Command said in a statement. *—PTI*

'Be quiet, small man': Musk clashes with Polish minister

WASHINGTON, 10 MARCH

Tech billionaire Elon Musk and United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio have traded barbs with Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski over the use of Musk's Starlink internet service in Ukraine.

During the tense exchange on X on Sunday, Sikorski suggested that Poland, which pays Ukraine's Starlink costs to help it repel Russia's invasion, might have to seek alternative suppliers if Musk's satellite network proves to be an "unreliable provider".

Sikorski made the comments after Musk said the Ukrainian army's "entire front line would collapse" without Starlink.

"I literally challenged Putin to one-on-one physical combat over Ukraine and my Starlink system is the backbone of the Ukrainian army. Their entire front line would collapse if I turned it off," Musk said.

Rubio came to Musk's defence following Sikorski's post, accusing the Polish politician of "making things up".

Musk later lashed out at Sikorski himself, posting: "Be quiet, small man. You pay a tiny fraction of the cost. And there is no substitute for Starlink." *—Agencies*

N KOREA FIRES BALLISTIC MISSILES INTO SEA

SEOUL, 10 MARCH

North Korea fired several ballistic missiles into the sea on Monday, South Korea's military said, hours after South Korean and US troops kicked off their annual combined drills, which the North views as an invasion rehearsal.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile firings, North Korea's fifth missile launch event this year, were detected from the North's Hwanghae province but gave no further details such as how far they flew.

The Freedom Shield exercise began after the South Korean and US militaries paused live-fire training while Seoul investigates how two of its fighter jets mistakenly bombed a civilian area. *—PTI*

Iran open to discussing concerns about nukes

TEHRAN, 10 MARCH

Iran on Sunday said it would consider negotiations with the United States if the talks were confined to concerns about the militarisation of its nuclear programme.

In a statement on X, the country's UN mission said, "If the objective of negotiations is to address concerns vis-à-vis any potential militarisation of Iran's nuclear programme, such discussions may be subject to consideration."

A day earlier, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei had rejected talks with the US, because he said they would be aimed at imposing restrictions on Iran's missile programme and its influence in the region.

Khamenei's remarks came a day after President Donald Trump acknowledged sending a letter to him seeking a new deal with Tehran to restrain its rapidly advancing nuclear programme and replace the nuclear deal he withdrew America from during his first term in office. Khamenei said US demands would be both military and related to the regional influence of Iran. He said such talks would not solve problems between Iran and the West.

Trump's overture comes as both Israel and the United States have warned they will never let Iran acquire a nuclear weapon, leading to fears of a military confrontation as Tehran enriches uranium at near weapons-grade levels — something only done by atomic-armed nations.

Tehran has long maintained its programme is for peaceful purposes, even as its officials increasingly threaten to pursue the bomb. *—PTI*

Ali Khamenei PHOTO: X

An attack on Iran's nuclear facilities would entirely contaminate the waters of the Gulf and threaten life in Qatar
—Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Qatar PM

Zelenskyy visits Saudi ahead of talks with US

RIYADH, 10 MARCH

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy travelled to Saudi Arabia to meet crown prince Mohammed bin Salman on Monday, ahead of talks between officials of his country and the US on ending the war with Russia at an increasingly precarious moment for Kyiv.

The United States, once Ukraine's main ally, has upended its wartime policies in its stated pursuit of a rapid end to the fighting, engaging directly with Moscow while cutting off military assistance and intelligence sharing for Kyiv.

Zelenskiyy is expected to meet Mohammed bin Salman, whose Saudi Arabia has played various mediating roles since Russia's 2022 invasion, including brokering prisoner exchanges and hosting talks between Russia and the United States last month.

Tomorrow's talks between US and Ukrainian officials – the first official meeting since a disastrous Oval Office encounter between Zelenskyy and US President Donald Trump – are expected to focus on a bilateral minerals deal and how to end the war.

Under huge pressure from Trump, who wants the war ended at lightning speed, Zelenskyy has been at pains to show they are on the same page.

Zelenskyy has said he will not attend the talks with US officials and that the Ukrainian delegation will include his chief of staff and his foreign and defense ministers *—Agencies*

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammed bin Salman PHOTO: X

Russia expels 2 British diplomats in Moscow

MOSCOW, 10 MARCH

Russia said on Monday it was expelling two British diplomats based at the embassy in Moscow over spying allegations.

Russia's Federal Security Service, or FSB, said in a statement quoted by the state news agency RIA Novosti that the two diplomats had provided false personal data while seeking permission to enter the country and had engaged in alleged intelligence and subversive activities that threatened Russia's security. It didn't offer any evidence.

According to the RIA Novosti report, a decision has been made to revoke the diplomats' accreditations and they have been ordered to leave Russia within two weeks. The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a separate statement that it summoned a British embassy official.

"Moscow will not tolerate the activities of undeclared British intelligence officers on Russian territory," it said.

There was no immediate response from the UK authorities.

The Federal Security Servicelast year accused seven British diplomats of spying. Six expulsions were announced in September, and one more in November. The UK called the moves at the time "baseless."

The expulsions came amid soaring tensions over the war in Ukraine and after London decided to revoke the credentials of an attache at the Russian Embassy and limit Moscow's diplomatic activities in Britain.

Last month, London expelled a Russian diplomat in response to the November expulsion. *—PTI*

The expulsions came after London decided limit Moscow's diplomatic activities in Britain. photo: x

RECOVERY STRUGGLE

Aus begins clean up after storm

WELLINGTON, 10 MARCH

Australia's prime minister cautioned that the fallout from a vicious tropical storm over the weekend was "far from over" as parts of two states remained inundated with floodwaters on Monday, even as the initial threat continued to recede.

One person was killed and several others injured after heavy rain lashed east coast on Saturday, toppling trees and power lines and inundating some parts of Queensland and New South Wales with record downpours.

The two states escaped the level of chaos forecast from the tropical low weather system, which was earlier expected to make landfall as the first tropical cyclone to hit south east Queensland in 51 years – before weakening as it approached. *—PTI*

Heavy rains kill 16 in Argentina

BUENOS AIRES, 10 MARCH

Heavy rains that flooded a city on Argentina's east coast in recent days have killed at least 16 people, officials said on Sunday. Rescue teams were searching for dozens of others reported missing, including two girls and two adults. Authorities said they were swept away by floodwaters unleashed by rains that began pelting the city of Bahía Blanca on Friday. Crews have evacuated more than 1,450 people from the city located south of the capital of Buenos Aires. Those evacuated include patients from a local hospital. Some 30cm of rain have fallen in Bahía Blanca in recent days, when the historical monthly average is about 12.9cm. No rain was forecast for the next 72 hours. *—PTI*

Gold falls Rs 150, silver declines Rs 250

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Falling for the third day in a row, gold prices retreated by Rs 150 to Rs 88,750 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid a weak trend in the overseas markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled lower at Rs 88,900 per 10 grams on Friday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity slipped by Rs 150 to Rs 88,350 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 88,500 per 10 grams. Silver prices also declined by Rs 250 to Rs 99,250 per kg, snapping the four-day winning run. *—PTI*

PHOTO:X

SEBI amends rules to strengthen SME IPOs

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has implemented a stricter regulatory framework for small and medium enterprise (SME) initial public offerings (IPOs), mandating a profitability requirement and limiting the offer-for-sale (OFS) component. Under the new rules, SMEs intending to launch an IPO must have a minimum operating profit (EBITDA) of Rs 1 crore for at least two of the last three financial years. The OFS component in SME IPOs is capped at 20 per cent of the total issue size, and shareholders will be restricted from offloading more than 50 per cent of their existing holdings. The reforms follow a remarkable surge in SME public offerings, with around 240 enterprises raising over Rs 8,700 crore in 2024, significantly up from Rs 4,686 crore in 2023, highlighting the robust performance. *—PTI*

Zomato investors approve name change to Eternal

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Shareholders of Zomato have voted in favour of renaming the company to 'Eternal', as per a recent stock exchange filing. The food delivery brand and its app will continue to operate under the Zomato name. Eternal will encompass four key businesses: Zomato, Blinkit, District, and Hyperpure. The shareholders' resolution allows for the modification of the company's name, along with changes to the Memorandum and Articles of Association. In a letter to shareholders last month, Zomato Founder and CEO Deepinder Goyal indicated that the Board had already sanctioned this change and urged shareholders to do the same. The transition signifies a new chapter for the company while maintaining the established Zomato identity for its food delivery services. *—PTI*

Finance ministry seeks applications for IRDAI chairman

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

The Finance Ministry has announced an invitation for applications to fill the position of Chairperson of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), following the impending end of Debasish Panda's term on 13 March. Interested candidates must submit their applications by 6 April 2025. Panda, who became IRDAI Chairman on 14 March 2022, previously served as Secretary in the Department of Financial Services. The notification stipulates that applicants should preferably possess at least 30 years of relevant experience, having worked at the level of Secretary to the Government of India or equivalent, along with a strong track record in leadership and decision-making. The role comes with a consolidated monthly salary of Rs 5.62 lakh, excluding housing and transportation benefits, and applicants must be below 63 years of age upon vacancy. *—PTI*

Veg thali prices drop, non-veg thali surges in Feb

Crisil says non-veg thali is pricier by 6%, veg cheaper by 1% YoY

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

A recent Crisil report highlights a 1 per cent year-on-year (YoY) decrease in the cost of a home-cooked vegetarian thali in February, while the price of a non-vegetarian thali saw a notable increase of approximately 6 per cent.

The drop in vegetarian thali prices was largely attributed to lower rates for tomatoes and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), contrasting with the rising costs linked to broiler chicken in non-vegetarian meals.

Tomato prices fell by 28 per cent from last year, dropping to Rs 23 per kg from Rs 32 per kg, primarily due to a 20 per cent increase in market arrivals. LPG prices also decreased by 11 per cent YoY, with the price of a 14.2 kg cylinder in Delhi falling from Rs 903 to Rs 803.

However, the overall decrease in vegetarian thali costs was moderated by rising prices for other essential ingredients; onions rose by 11 per cent, potatoes by 16 per cent, and vegetable oils by 18 per cent compared to the previous year.

The drop in vegetarian thali prices was largely attributed to lower rates for tomatoes and liquefied petroleum gas PHOTO: FREEPIK

- In contrast, the rise in non-vegetarian thali prices was driven by a 15 per cent YoY increase in broiler chicken prices, which represents about 50 per cent of its cost

In contrast, the rise in non-vegetarian thali prices was driven by a 15 per cent YoY increase in broiler chicken prices, which represents about 50 per cent of its cost. This price surge followed a low base from last year due to oversupply, compounded by a 6 per cent increase in maize feed costs.

On a month-on-month basis, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian thali prices fell by 5 per cent in February. *—ANI*

Fitch removes Adani Energy from rating watch

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Fitch Ratings has removed energy infrastructure company Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) from its 'Ratings Watch Negative' list, the first upgrade by an international ratings agency since the US indictment.

Fitch affirmed AESL long-term foreign and local-currency issuer default ratings (IDRs) at 'BBB-'.

Fitch said it affirmed the ratings as the Adani group has demonstrated adequate funding access since the US indictment of certain board members of another group entity, Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL), on 20 November, 2024.

"We believe the risks associated with the group's liquidity and funding requirements have moderated," it said.

PHOTO:X

"However, the outlook is negative to reflect our view that the proceedings and outcome of the US investigations could reveal that the group's corporate governance practices are weaker than we expected and lead to negative rating action in the near to medium term."

Fitch said it will monitor the investigations for any evidence of weakness in the entities' governance practices and internal controls, and the impact on AESL's financial flexibility.

Since the US indictment of group chairman Gautam Adani and two other key executives in an alleged bribery scheme to win renewable energy supply contracts, the conglomerate has shown solid resilience with no compromise on the credit profile and business performance.

AESL has won a bid to install 22.8 million smart meters across five Indian states, under a design, build, finance, own, operate and transfer structure. *—PTI*

Rupee sinks 38P; logs worst 1-day fall in a month

MUMBAI, 10 MARCH

The rupee depreciated by 38 paise, its steepest fall in over a month, to close at 87.33 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday due to volatile crude oil prices amid tariff uncertainties worldwide and unabated outflow of foreign funds.

A weaker American currency failed to support the local unit as a sell-off in the domestic equity market hit the sentiment adversely, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened weak at 87.24 and touched the day's low of 87.36 amid intense volatility. The unit touched an intraday high of 87.16 before ending the session at 87.33 against the greenback, loss of 38 paise from its previous closing level. *—PTI*

SENSEX FALLS 217.41 PTS

Markets end lower as late sell-off hits industrials, oil & gas

MUMBAI, 10 MARCH

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower in a volatile session on Monday dragged by selling in industrials and oil & gas shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 217.41 points or 0.29 per cent to settle at 74,115.17 with 22 of its constituents ending lower and eight with gains.

The index opened higher and touched a high of 74,741.25 during the day. However, selling pressure emerged in the pre-close session and the index tanked 310.34 points or 0.41 per cent to hit a low of 74,022.24.

The Nifty of NSE declined by 92.20 points or 0.41 per cent to close at 22,460.30.

From the 30 Sensex companies, IndusInd Bank, Zomato, Larsen & Toubro, Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Reliance Industries, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tech Mahindra and Tata Consultancy Services were among the laggards.

On the other hand, Power Grid, Hindustan Unilever, Infosys, Nestle India, Asian Paints, ITC, Sun Pharmaceuticals and ICICI Bank were the gainers.

In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul ended on a mixed note.

European markets were trading lower in the mid-session deals. Wall Street settled on a positive note on Friday. *—PTI*

PHOTO:PIXABAY

IndusInd shares tumble 5% after RBI move

Shares of IndusInd Bank dropped 5.38 per cent on Monday, hitting a low of Rs 886.40 on the BSE, after RBI granted CEO Sumant Kathpalia only a one-year extension instead of three years. Analysts see this as a sign of an impending leadership transition, with Deputy CEO & CFO Arun Khurana. *—Agencies*

Real money gaming bodies sign ethics code

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Industry bodies representing online real money gaming companies, have jointly signed a 'code of ethics' which their member companies will adopt for promoting user safety and responsible gaming practices, including KYC verification and, spending limit, a joint statement said on Monday.

The members of these gaming industry bodies include Dream11, My11Circle, Khelo Fantasy Live, SG11 Fantasy, WinZO, Games24X7, Junglee Games etc.

The Ministry of Electronics and IT are yet to execute online gaming rules that were released in April 2023.

Tamil Nadu has earlier banned Real Money Games (RMG) but in February issued stringent rules like ban on minors, spending limits and blank hours after midnight to regulate platforms. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Anti-dumping duty on water treatment chemical from China & Japan

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

India has imposed anti-dumping duty of up to USD 986 per tonne for five years on a chemical, used for water treatment, imported from China and Japan to protect the domestic industry from cheap inbound shipments, according to a finance ministry notification.

The decision follows recommendations from the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), an investigation arm of the commerce ministry, to impose the duty on 'Trichloroisocyanuric acid'.

In its recommendations, the directorate has stated that the domestic industry has suffered material injury due to the dumped imports in India from China and Japan. Both countries are key trading partners of India.

"The anti-dumping duty imposed, shall be levied for a period of five years unless revoked, superseded or amended earlier," the notification said.

While DGTR conducts the alleged dumping probe and recommends the duty, the finance ministry takes the final decision to impose the same within three months of the recommendation.

Countries initiate anti-dumping probes to check if their domestic industries have been hurt because of a surge in below-cost imports. *—PTI*

Ola Electric showrooms raided over trade certificate violations

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Shares of Ola Electric tumbled 5 per cent on Monday, March 10, following reports of regulatory action against the company. Transport authorities across multiple states conducted raids, closed showrooms, and seized vehicles, citing violations of India's Motor Vehicles Act.

A report revealed that over 95 per cent of Ola's 3,400 showrooms lacked the necessary trade certificates, which are required to sell, display, or offer test rides of unregistered two-wheelers. At least six local transport departments are reportedly investigating the company.

Despite the allegations, an Ola spokesperson dismissed the claims, calling them "misplaced" and "prejudiced." The company maintains that its experience centers focus on customer engagement rather than direct sales and that its unregistered vehicle inventory complies with regulations. It has also secured trade certificates at select locations when required.

Beyond regulatory scrutiny, Ola Electric is grappling with multiple challenges, including customer complaints over quality and service, declining market share to Bajaj Auto and TVS Motor Co, and delays in its electric motorcycle launch. The company is also planning layoffs of over 1,000 employees this month.

Ola Electric's stock fell to Rs 54.11, nearing its 52-week low of Rs 53.71. The stock has plunged 52 per cent in six months and 36 per cent in 2025 alone, remaining over 60 per cent below its August listing peak. *—Agencies*

A report revealed that over 95 per cent of Ola's 3,400 showrooms lacked the necessary trade certificates PHOTO: X/OLA

PHOTO: X

Takashi Nakajima is new Prez & CEO of Honda India

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Japanese automaker Honda on Monday said it has appointed Takashi Nakajima as the new President & CEO of Honda Cars India.

Nakajima will take charge from 1 April, 2025, from Takuya Tsumura, who moves to Japan at Honda head office after completing his India tenure.

Nakajima joined Honda in 1994 and has been associated with Honda Motor Co Ltd for more than 30 years. He has been serving as President of Honda Motor Russia since 2021 with a vast experience having worked in various positions of responsibility in several international markets like Japan, China, Spain, Czech Republic and Russia in the areas of business, product planning, marketing and sales. *—PTI*

1M+ WORKERS NEEDED

India may face AI talent shortfall by 2027

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

India is poised to become a global AI talent hub, but a looming skill gap threatens to hinder its progress, with a new study by Bain & Company revealing that the country's AI sector could face a shortfall of over a million skilled professionals by 2027.

The report highlighted the urgent need for India to reskill and upskill its workforce to meet the growing demand for AI expertise.

"India has a unique opportunity to position itself as a global AI talent hub. However, by 2027, the job openings in AI are expected to be 1.5–2x of the talent availability. The challenge -- and opportunity -- lies in reskilling and upskilling a significant portion of the existing talent base on emerging technology tools and skillsets," said Saikat Banerjee, Partner and leader in Bain & Company's AI, Insights, and Solutions practice in India.

India's AI sector could surpass 2.3 million job openings by 2027 while the AI talent pool is expected to grow to around 1.2 million, presenting an opportunity to reskill more than 1 million workers, according to the report.

Since 2019, AI-related job postings have exploded, increasing by 21 per cent annually, while compensation for these roles has risen by 11 per cent each year.

Despite this surge in demand and attractive salaries, the supply of qualified AI professionals has not kept pace, creating a widening talent gap that risks slowing down AI adoption across industries. *—PTI*

Since 2019, AI-related job have increased by 21% PHOTO: FREEPIK

- India's AI sector could surpass 2.3 million job openings by 2027 while the AI talent pool is expected to grow to around 1.2 million, presenting an opportunity to reskill more than 1 million workers, according to the report

Sun Pharma to acquire Checkpoint Therapeutics

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries has announced its intention to acquire US-based immunotherapy firm Checkpoint Therapeutics, Inc for up to USD 355 million (£290 million). Under the agreement, Sun Pharma will pay an upfront amount of USD 4.10 per share of common stock, equating to a total upfront value of roughly USD 355 million.

Additionally, Checkpoint stockholders will have the opportunity to receive a contingent value right of up to USD 0.70 per share based on the achievement of specific milestones.

Checkpoint is a Nasdaq-listed company focused on developing pioneering treatments for solid tumour cancers, including its FDA-approved therapy UNLOXCYT (cosibelimab-ipdl), designed for patients with advanced cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma (cSCC). Sun Pharma's Managing Director, Dilip Shanghvi, emphasised that this acquisition will enhance their innovative portfolio in onco-derm therapy, providing patients with new treatment options.

The completion of the transaction is anticipated in the second quarter of 2025. Following the announcement, shares of Sun Pharma rose by over 2 per cent, with stock trading at Rs 1,643.20 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). Checkpoint Therapeutics reported a revenue of USD 0.04 million and a net loss of USD 27.3 million for the nine months ending September 2024, highlighting the firm's ongoing development stage. *—PTI*

PHOTO:ANI

Sukant, Nitesh win gold at Spanish Para Badminton

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Paris Paralympics champion Kumar Nitesh and Sukant Kadam secured gold medals in SL3 and SL4 categories respectively, leading India's charge at the Spanish Para Badminton International 2025 – II in Vitoria, Spain. Nitesh registered a 21-19 21-19 win over Japan's Daisuke Fujihara in the final of the SL3 category, while Sukant defeated fellow Indian Tarun 21-13 21-10 in the SL4 category on Sunday. In SH6 category, Nithyashre emerged victorious, defeating Poland's Szmigiel in the final to claim a top podium finish. In men's doubles, Nitesh Kumar and Tarun edged past India's Jagadesh Dilli and Naveen Sivakumar 21-14, 23-25, 22-20. —*PTI*

CWG rebranded as Commonwealth Sport

LONDON, 10 MARCH

Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) on Monday changed its name to Commonwealth Sport, saying it was a transition from being a governing body to becoming a "movement". The decision to change its name was announced on the occasion of Commonwealth Day – 10 March. "From Commonwealth Day 2025 onwards, the Commonwealth Games Federation will be known as Commonwealth Sport," the governing body of the Commonwealth Games and Commonwealth Youth Games said in a media release. The 'Commonwealth Games Federation' will be retained as the name of the legal entity only. Meanwhile, King Charles, the Patron of Commonwealth Sport, will officially launch the inaugural Commonwealth Sport King's Baton Relay for the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games at Buckingham Palace on the Commonwealth Day on Monday. —*PTI*

Sharma, Ahlawat finish T-37, T-42 in Joburg Open

JOHANNESBURG, 10 MARCH

Indian golfers Shubhankar Sharma and Veer Ahlawat concluded their campaigns at the Joburg Open with disappointing finishes, placing T-37 and T-42 respectively. Sharma started strong with rounds of 66-65, but struggled in the latter half of the tournament, carding 74-72. Ahlawat produced a remarkable 63 to make the cut but followed up with rounds of 72-70 over the weekend. Scotland's Calum Hill claimed a spectacular victory in the tournament's history, triumphing in a tense three-man playoff. Hill shot a blistering final round of 62 to finish the tournament on 14 under par, drawing level with South African golfers Jacques Kruyswijk (66) and Shaun Norris (70). In the playoff, all three players parred the par-four 18th hole on first attempt. —*PTI*

Russell Henley wins Bay Hill for biggest career win

ORLANDO, 10 MARCH

Russell Henley delivered a late charge that would have made Arnold Palmer proud, capped off by chipping in for eagle on the 16th hole to rally with a 2-under 70 at Bay Hill for the biggest victory of his career. Henley trailed Collin Morikawa by three shots with five holes to play in the Arnold Palmer Invitational when it all changed with a pair of two-shot swings on Sunday. Morikawa missed the green on the par-3 14th hole and took bogey, while Henley hit his tee shot to just inside 10 feet for birdie, cutting the deficit to one shot. Nothing was more stunning than the par-5 16th hole, however. The victory moves him to No. 7 in the world, and he looks the part of a top-10 player.—*PTI*

India's triumph silences critics, says Rohit

Staying in Dubai was a decision beyond their control, for which team came under fire

DUBAI, 10 MARCH

Moments after India sealed the Champions Trophy, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli broke into an impromptu 'Dandiya' dance, holding the stumps.

Head coach Gautam Gambhir walked around the field with a rare wide grin, hugging his wards.

While the criticism might have had some merit in it, the way it was directed at them was not justified. But now, they have a lifeline, a firmer ground to control their own destiny and a much clearer path to the future for the team.

It came after wholehearted trust in the process that the management set in place before this event, as indicated by Rohit.

"Someone was telling me that we've lost only one game in the last three ICC tournaments. So, it's a great milestone to have. So, it shows a lot of quality in the team, a lot of depth, a lot of understanding within the group," skipper Rohit said after the title triumph.

hd ian team celebrates win against New Zealand in the C C Champions Trophy 2025 final cricket match, in Dubai, UAE, on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

Staying in Dubai for the ICC showpiece was a decision beyond their control, for which the team came under fire for no real reason.

ODI WC is some distance away but India need Rohit

There were two instances during Rohit Sharma's lengthy post-tournament press conference on Sunday when the issue of his retirement cropped up.

The first time the subject was broached with him after a triumphant campaign in the Champions Trophy in Dubai, the Indian captain gave an open-ended answer, "No future plans, jaise chal raha hain, chalta rahega (the way it is going, it will continue). —*PTI*

CHAMPS SPEAK

A bittersweet end as Rohit took the match away from us
-Mitchell Santner, New Zealand skipper

There were moments in past tournaments where we weren't able to finish games or capitalise on crucial situations. But this time, we learned from those experiences
-Virat Kohli, Right hand batter

I remember 2017 very closely, couldn't finish that time
-Hardik Pandya, All-rounder

PCB to protest exclusion from ICC closing ceremony

LAHORE, 10 MARCH

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is set to register its protest with the ICC for ignoring its CEO and Champions Trophy tournament director Sumair Ahmed Syed during the event's closing ceremony in Dubai.

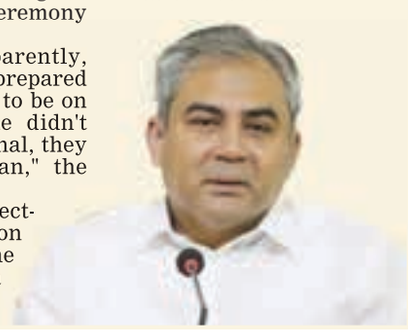
A source in the PCB said on Monday that chairman Mohsin Naqvi was not satisfied with the explanation given by the ICC for not having Ahmed on stage at the presentation ceremony on Sunday.

"The ICC, apparently, has said it had prepared for Mohsin Naqvi to be on stage so when he didn't show up for the final, they changed their plan," the source said.

The PCB has rejected this explanation and noted that the ICC had made a number of errors during the tournament regarding Pakistan's status as host nation.

This included changing the CT2025 logo in the live broadcasts feed of the India versus Bangladesh game and then playing the Indian national anthem in the Australia versus England match in Lahore.

The ICC claimed due to a mix up with the playlist the Indian national anthem was played for a few seconds before error was corrected. —*PTI*



Vani aims for hat-trick at Hero Women's Pro Golf

GURUGRAM, 10 MAR

Vani Kapoor will strive to secure her third consecutive victory as she prepares to tee off at her home course, the DLF Golf and Country Club, in the sixth leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour this Tuesday.

The accomplished domestic golfer has emerged victorious in both the fourth and fifth legs of the Tour and is eager to close in on the Order of Merit leader, Sneha Singh, who has claimed two titles this season.

The sixth leg features 40 players, showcasing prominent talents including Vani, Sneha Singh, Amandeep Drall, Jasmine Shekar, Ridhima Dilawari, Gaurika Bishnoi, and Neha Tripathi. The event boasts a prize purse of Rs. 16 lakhs.

PHOTO: ANI

The DLF Golf and Country Club has been a cornerstone of Indian women's golf, also hosting the annual Hero Women's Indian Open later in the year.

This season, Vani has leveraged the domestic Tour to regain her form. —*PTI*

ALL ENGLAND C'SHIPS

Indian shuttlers face many hurdles

BIRMINGHAM, 10 MARCH

Indian shuttlers are bracing for one of their most formidable challenges yet as they aim to secure the elusive All England Championships title, starting Tuesday. Since Prakash Padukone's historic victory in 1980 and Pullela Gopichand's triumph in 2001, no Indian player has clinched this prestigious title, considered second only to the Olympics and World Championships.

While Indian badminton has seen remarkable success over the last two decades with athletes like PV Sindhu, Saina Nehwal, and Kidambi Srikanth winning major titles, the All England Championship remains out of reach. Both Saina and Lakshya Sen came agonisingly close in 2015 and 2022 as runners-up, while Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand reached the semifinals in consecutive editions.

This year, challenges are heightened as the Indian contingent grapples with injuries and inconsistent performances.

Sindhu returns after a hamstring injury forced her out of last month's Asia Mixed Team Championships. The two-time Olympic medallist is set to face Korea's Ga Eun Kim in the first round.

Lakshya Sen is looking to recover his form after a disappointing start to 2025, opening against Japan's Koki Watanabe. HS Prannoy, battling back from chikungunya and ranked World No. 30, will face France's Toma Junior Popov.

In doubles, the Asian Games champions Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, seeded seventh, will take to the court against Denmark's Daniel Lundgaard and Mads Vestergaard as they seek championship glory. —*PTI*

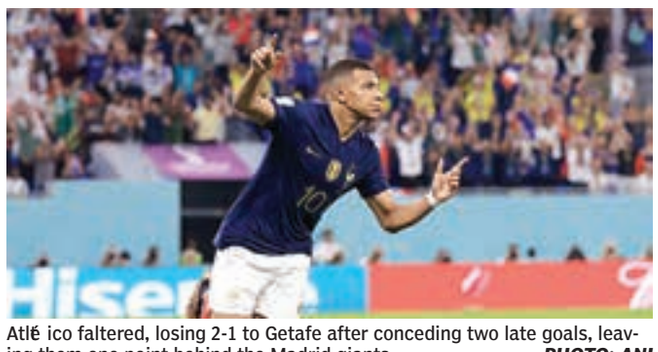
- This year, challenges are heightened as the Indian contingent grapples with injuries and inconsistent performances. Sindhu returns after a hamstring injury forced her out of last month's Asia Mixed Team Championships

Verstappen seeks 5th title as Hamilton joins F1

LONDON, 10 MARCH

Lando Norris is set to navigate a challenging path in his quest for the Formula 1 title this season, contending not only with his former friend-turned-rival Max Verstappen, but also with Lewis Hamilton as he aims for a record eighth championship in 2025. Verstappen, pursuing his fifth consecutive title, resembles historic champions like Michael Schumacher in his competitive spirit.

While Norris is seen as a strong contender following a promising 2024 season with McLaren, he remains aware of the fierce competition from Verstappen, Hamilton, and his teammate Oscar Piastri, alongside Ferrari's Charles Leclerc and Mercedes' George Russell. The past six races of 2024 featured five winners from different teams, underscoring the unpredictability of the upcoming season. "I've always performed better under pressure," Norris stated, embracing the role of the favourite. —*PTI*



Atlé ico faltered, losing 2-1 to Getafe after conceding two late goals, leaving them one point behind the Madrid giants *PHOTO: ANI*

Madrid triumphs to join Barcelona at La Liga

MADRID, 10 MARCH

Kylian Mbappé and Vinícius Júnior struck within five minutes in the first half to secure Real Madrid a 2-1 victory over Rayo Vallecano, placing them level on points with Barcelona at the top of La Liga.

Mbappé opened the scoring in the 30th minute, followed by Vinícius in the 34th, securing Madrid 57 points, the same as Barcelona, whose match against Osasuna was postponed following the passing of first-team doctor Carles Miñarro Garcia. A moment of silence was observed at the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium in his honour.

Rayo's Pedro Díaz pulled one back in stoppage time of the first half, but Madrid held firm despite missed opportunities to extend their lead. Coach Carlo Ancelotti rested players ahead of Wednesday's Champions League clash against Atlético Madrid.

Atlético faltered, losing 2-1 to Getafe after conceding two late goals, leaving them one point behind the Madrid giants. —*PTI*

Man U draws 1-1 with Arsenal

MANCHESTER, 10 MARCH

David Raya's stunning double save denied Bruno Fernandes a late winner as Manchester United drew 1-1 with Arsenal at Old Trafford in a gripping Premier League clash. The result leaves Arsenal facing an uphill battle for the title, trailing 15 points behind leaders Liverpool.

Frustration was palpable for Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta, whose side has now dropped points in three consecutive league matches. Arteta acknowledged the urgency for wins but remained hopeful following Raya's key interventions. In added time, the goalkeeper thwarted Fernandes' close-range effort and quickly reacted to prevent the ball from crossing the line.

United's players, responding to intense fan protests prior to the match, displayed resilience. Fernandes struck a powerful free-kick to put United ahead in first-half added time, yet missed opportunities prevented them from extending their lead. Declan Rice equalised for Arsenal in the 74th minute.

United are 14th in the table on 34 points, and the club is still searching for improvements *PHOTO: AP*

In other matches, Chelsea climbed to fourth after Marc Cucurella's goal secured a 1-0 victory over Leicester, while Tottenham staged a remarkable comeback from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Bournemouth, with Son Heung-min netting the equaliser from the penalty spot.

As it stands, United are 14th in the table on 34 points, and the club is still searching for improvements under head coach Ruben Amorim. —*PTI*

PLAYERS ARE ROLE MODELS

IPL told to ban tobacco & alcohol ads

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

The Indian Health Ministry has mandated that the Indian Premier League (IPL) prohibit all forms of tobacco and alcohol promotions, including surrogate advertising, during the tournament starting on 22 March.

In a letter addressed to IPL chairman Arun Dhumal, Atul Goel, Director General of Health Services, stated that cricket players, who are seen as role models for the youth in India, should not be associated—directly or indirectly—with any tobacco or alcohol advertising.

Goel emphasised the need for the IPL to rigorously enforce regulations banning all advertising related to tobacco and alcohol within stadiums and during national television broadcasts of the matches. He also insisted on prohibiting the sale of tobacco and alcohol products at all events affiliated with the IPL.

"The promotion of sportspersons, including commentators who endorse products linked to tobacco or alcohol, should also be discouraged," he added. The IPL garners a massive viewership, making it a prime target for advertisers.

Highlighting the public health crisis, Goel pointed out that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic lung disease, diabetes, and hypertension lead to over 70 per cent of annual deaths in India. He noted that tobacco and alcohol are significant risk factors contributing to this burden, with India reporting nearly 1.4 million tobacco-related deaths each year.

Goel concluded by stressing that cricketers have a moral obligation to promote healthy lifestyles, stating that the IPL should play a key role in supporting government health initiatives. —*PTI*

- In a letter addressed, it stated that cricket players, who are seen as role models for the youth in India, should not be associated—directly or indirectly—with any tobacco or alcohol advertising

Hockey India announces record Rs 12 cr prize pool

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Hockey India has unveiled a remarkable prize pool of Rs 12 crore for its seventh Annual Awards, with 32 players nominated across eight categories. Scheduled for Saturday, the event will celebrate exceptional performances from the 2024 season.

A highlight of the ceremony will be the prestigious Balbir Singh Sr Award for Player of the Year, recognising the top male and female players. The event will also shine a light on emerging talent with the Jugraj Singh Award for Upcoming Player of the Year (Men) and the Asunta Lakra Award for Upcoming Player of the Year (Women).

In addition, several awards will honour outstanding individuals in various positions, including the Baljit Singh Award for Goalkeeper of the Year, Pargat Singh Award for Defender of the Year, Ajit Pal Singh Award for Midfielder of the Year, and the Dhanraj Pillay Award for Forward of the Year.

This year's awards coincide with the 50th anniversary of India's first World Cup victory in 1975, while 2025 will mark 100 years since India joined the International Hockey Federation (FIH).

The ceremony will also pay tribute to India's Olympic bronze medal-winning teams, in Asian Champions. —*PTI*

- This year's awards coincide with the 50th anniversary of India's first World Cup victory in 1975, while 2025 will mark 100 years since India joined FIH